INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION:

A pilot study in the Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region.

Final Report

December 2011

Prepared by the Project Team

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DEHub.edu.au
innovation in distance education

ACODE
australasian council on open, distance and e-learning

auqa

INQAAHE
International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

Support for this project has been provided by the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICDE.

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The report provides a pilot review of formal and informal literature of regulatory frameworks for distance education in the Southwest Pacific/ South East Asia Region. It also presents the outcomes of nine case studies, which were achieved with the help of nine higher education institutions, and analyses the key regulatory barriers and enablers for distance education in the study region.

The research was also undertaken jointly by the project partners. This report should be read in conjunction with an online resource developed during the project that provides further detail:[see http://icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education].

Dr Rosalind James

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While the project is grateful for the assistance provided by these organisations and other contributing colleagues, the views expressed and conclusions drawn in this report are those of the project team and should not be attributed to ICDE or any other organisation or person.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a pilot investigation of regulatory frameworks for distance and online education within a designated group of Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region nations.

As a pilot study, this project aimed to assess one particular methodological approach to identifying, accessing, collating, analysing and presenting the requested regulatory information and to advise ICDE about its suitability to be scaled up to a larger project that includes more regions, countries and institutions. The protocol adopted for this study has enabled the team to assess the feasibility of conducting a project to analyse regulatory frameworks and their impact on distance and online education and has highlighted possible areas for refinement before ICDE considers moving towards a larger study.

This pilot was undertaken by a consortium of DEHub, the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and ELearning (ACODE), the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Formal and informal literature on regulatory frameworks for distance education (DE) in the Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region was reviewed. Where locatable, existing laws, policies, rules and regulations relating to distance and online education were collated and listed (with links) as an online resource. Contextual information was collected about the nominated countries within the region, along with nine case studies from representative institutions whose primary focus was distance and online education.

It is important to note that cultural sensitivity was a key consideration of the pilot study. Respect is witnessed in our transparent ethical process with approval through the University of New England (HE11-064; see Appendix D); member checking of the public presentation of information; the use of persons who can provide access for participants across language barriers, where possible; and feedback through the ICDE Advisory Group. The team argues that respect for regional differences, country regulations and institutional identity are critical to the methods undertaken. This is supported by UNESCO (2007) who observe that different cultures will have different understandings of quality and management and additionally Goldsmith (1993) further warns of being culturally imperialistic. Respect for the three layers is demonstrated through the attempts to locate, analyse and validate findings and recommendations in ways that those involved find comprehensible and accessible and that facilitate their own understandings.

The chancellor of one university remarked that they found our approach refreshing because "…so often these studies do not consider the context within which rules operate: the culture, historical roots, educational influences, socio-economic conditions and so on are all important for understanding how these shaped regulatory and policy development and

interpretation. While policy and regulations are important, they are often false indicators of impact ... it's not so much law and policy, it's what people do with them, how they are implemented, that makes a real difference and determines impact. So, if a larger group of institutions who are in-country responded to the case study, then you would see different interpretations. You can't do this standing outside looking in."

This suggests that simple comparison of the legislation would be considered superficial. In order to truly assess impact, implementation and practice must be taken into account. It is most appropriate that this sort of critical analysis be undertaken by in-country practising academics who are sensitive to the context and have intimate knowledge of the scope of impact, restrictions or affordances to online and distance education that can be attributed to regulatory frameworks. This pilot project found that no assumptions should be made that the presence or otherwise of regulatory frameworks are barriers to distance education. Given the diversity of the twenty-four countries profiled here, it is unlikely that one defined 'best practice' will meet the needs of the political diversity and/or differing barriers for governments and policy-makers, or even groups such as SEAMO, UNESCO, COL or AusAid etc.

Aims and outcomes of the pilot project

A key aim of this pilot was to provide a substantial source of information that will be of use to a range of stakeholders interested in regulatory frameworks for online and distance education in the study area. The project sought to develop an online resource that would remain a dynamic, 'living' databank that others might build upon in the future.

The project set out to achieve four key outcomes. These outcomes have been wholly or partially achieved during the life of the project, as acquitted below:

1. identify the main regulatory frameworks that apply to distance and online education in one region of the world;
2. collate the existing laws, policies, rules and regulations related to distance and online education in that region in a database;
3. compare the frameworks of all countries within the region and identify similarities and differences; and
4. undertake case studies as examples of distance and online education practice under the regulations currently extant within the region.

Approach

The pilot-project was designed with five main phases: literature review and data collation; design and construction of a pilot online resource that would present information about regulatory frameworks and data entry; analysis of the different regulatory contexts; institutional case studies as practice exemplars; and preparation of reports on findings and outcomes of the project.

Scope

This project explored the regulatory frameworks for distance higher education within the Asia/Pacific region limiting this to some key members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Pacific Island Forum nations. This involved a survey of existing literature and regulatory agency material for the following countries: ASEAN: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Pacific Islands Forum countries of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji (suspended from ASEAN on 2 May 2009), Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

This region provided a pilot study area that was sufficiently diverse to offer opportunities for comparison. It included large and small scale nations, which have differing operational contexts, advantages, challenges and constraints. Distance education is a priority area of cooperation among many of the countries in this region. Therefore, the various perspectives available within the study area would be of interest to numerous stakeholders, not least the countries themselves.

Project Findings

The project's findings and the approach used to derive them should have applicability across the sector. From these findings, individual institutions should be able to distil cues for work in their own contexts, especially in regard to policy development. Furthermore, the lessons learned should inform future decisions about whether and how to extend the pilot-study. Certainly, this information can guide further refinement of the methodological approach if the project is repeated in other contexts or at a greater scale.

Overarching Regulation or policy

Some legislation and policy regulating education (and, therefore, distance education) was identified for all countries.

Regulatory or policy influences

Out of the twenty-four countries, only four—the Commonwealth of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand and Singapore—do not appear to align themselves with the Education for All (EFA) program (http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/) led by UNESCO in order to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015, and thus contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight international MDGs are agreed to be achieved by 2015 by 193 United Nations member states and more than 23 International organisations (http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/). Two offices are located in Bangkok and Suva to serve the Asia Pacific (http://www.undp.org/asia/). In our study, all but the four countries listed above are working towards these goals, and also participating in a variety of other programs, such

as the United Nations Literacy Decade (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001840/184023e.pdf), UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education (http://www.unesco.org/delors/fourpil.htm) and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) (http://www.desd.org/). It is perhaps not surprising that, given their developed status, the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and Singapore do not see these as in-country priorities, but their governments are signatories to UNESCO and certainly contribute to the region's ongoing development in supporting these goals. Quality is discussed in the next section.

Regional regulatory or policy influences

The South Pacific Board of Education Assessment (SPBEA) (http://www.spbea.org.fj/) has two main sponsors, Australia and New Zealand. The aim of SPBEA is to develop assessment procedures for national or regional certificates. It has a membership of nine countries, all of which bar one, were part of this project: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Australia and New Zealand.

The Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Republic of Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, Republic of Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Nieu and Republic of Vanuatu all fall under the University of the South Pacific strategic plan 2010-2102 which serves twelve member countries (http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/Planning/USP_Strategic_Plan_2010_-_2012.pdf)

Additionally, these same twelve member countries align with the Pacific Islands Forum (PAF) (http://www.forumsec.org/).

The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) is also strong in the region, with fifteen countries included in our study being active participants, including Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Australia is the key sponsor and is encouraging closer economic relations, enhanced regional trade, capacity building and economic integration (http://www.dfat.gov.au/fta/pacer/index.html).

In addition, the same nations are signatories to the 2001 Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) (http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PICTA.pdf).

The Republic of Vanuatu has a range of other regional agreements that include African, Carribean and Pacific Island States (ACP)-EU Partnership Agreement; Asian – Pacific Postal Union; Millennium Challenge Compact (with the United States); and is party to the following bilateral agreements: AusAID, the New Zealand Aid Programme, UNICEF and a number of European Union agencies.

Indonesia, Brunei, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Kingdom of Thailand, New Zealand and Australia are signatories to the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) (http://www.asean.fta.govt.nz/).

The Republic of Kiribati, Samoa, Republic of Fiji Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Vanuatu are part of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) initiative called the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) (http://www.vussc.info/home). This unique collaboration across thirty countries has developed, amongst other initiatives, a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) that was launched in April 2010.

Another organisation, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, also provides technical and policy advice and assistance, training and research services to its Pacific Island members (http://www.spc.int/). They are currently coordinating the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Oceania project for Islands of the Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

National regulatory or policy influences

Without exception, every country in this project has National Acts, Ordinances or Legislation relating to the governance of education. Distance education was found to be operating at all levels of education in the region: 50% of countries offer schooling by distance, 66% offer VET courses by distance, and only one country (Brunei) does not have distance education at a higher education level. In general, the project identified that all countries had legislation and policy at the national level that impacted directly on a country's capability and capacity for distance education. State/district level regulation could only be identified in the case of Micronesia, Vanuatu and Australia. Although most countries offer distance education in some form, especially at higher levels of education, and distance education has a long history in this region of the world, having operated in many countries since the 1970s, legislation specific to distance education was uncovered in only two countries, Vietnam and Vanuatu.

Quality regulations

Establishing quality processes and standards for learning and teaching in online and distance education is a concern of many stakeholders. In some countries, it drives government policy and educational research and development in this area.

Of the twenty-four countries surveyed, twenty have processes for quality assurance and accreditation for distance education; although, it is unclear whether the use of new technologies has been addressed. For example, the Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement special interest group (QAQE, 2010) observes that while technology-enhanced learning is increasingly embedded within standard practice in higher education, current approaches to quality assurance contribute to the neglect of the ways in which technology can enhance rather than simply augment teaching and learning and that these issues can be exacerbated in transnational and distance learning programmes.

A systemic approach to quality assurance and accreditation and formalised processes and delegated responsibilities could be identified in all countries except Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Palau. It appears from our data

that all bar six countries (Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Palau, Republic of Singapore and the Solomon Islands) are members of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) or the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). APQN has a mission "To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them" (http://www.apqn.org/). The APQN draws upon support from its membership options to serve 53 different nations in the ASEAN/ASIA Pacific region and works closely with the World Bank and UNESCO. Since 2008, APQN has participated in the Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC). By way of contrast, INQAAHE is considered to be the global network of quality assurance agencies in higher education. Established in 1991, it now has more than 250 members (i.e. agencies that focus on quality) globally. INQAAHE collates, creates and distributes information to and for its members (http://www.inqaahe.org/index.php).

Of the six countries who are not members of the APQN, two (French Polynesia and New Caledonia) fall under the Education Code of the French Republic and are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The Federated States of Micronesia draw upon their historical past and responsibility of the United States of America (USA) and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions. The ACCJC is authorized to operate by the U.S. Department of Education through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (http://www.accjc.org/). Palau, Republic of Singapore (although the Council of Private Education has an intermediate membership with APQN) and the Solomons are also not members of INQAAHE.

Unusually, Samoa is a member of the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (http://www.paascu.org.ph/home2010/), who are also members of the APQN and INQAAHE. Not surprisingly given their Muslim populations, two countries—the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia—are members of Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (ADAAIW).

In this project, we expected that the countries studied would have similar concerns and expectations and that their students, future employers and society at large would want to have confidence in the quality of their programs regardless of modality or the location of their students. Therefore, regulation and quality assurance is no doubt of interest and a concern. According to Guri-Rozenblit, (2009): "[t]he search for efficient and valuable quality control mechanisms will reign prominently on the future agendas of higher education institutions implementing the various capabilities of the digital technologies" (p.118). It is, however, unclear from data collected from many countries in this pilot how quality is defined, measured, acquitted or indeed attested.

Conclusions

The most surprising realisation to emerge during the project was that there is very little scholarly literature against which to benchmark distance education regulatory frameworks. Lengthy and detailed searches of academic and corporate literature revealed little other than agency reporting. This points to a gap which ICDE may wish to pursue, given as pointed out earlier by Latchem & Ali (2012) that there is no agreement on standards and accountability measures. What would a 'benchmarking' matrix of good practice for regulatory frameworks look like? This pilot project identified numerous regulatory layers that could contribute to such a matrix. Amongst these the APQN is no doubt highly suitable to draw upon or more recently the AAOU Quality Assurance Statements,which contain 107 statements of best practice including policy and planning (that has been drawn upon heavily by Universitats Terbuka (one of this projects case study universities and also awarded ICDE Certificate of Quality in recognition of their decade worth of work). But these, are probably more relevant to this region and perhaps not all nations. The group cautions that without comprehensive culturally sensitive benchmarking exercises the reduction of the assessment of the regulatory frameworks to a theoretical exercise may well result in paternalistic or culturally imperialistic assumptions, as noted by Goldsmith (1993), and or the mythicising of anecdotal rumour about barriers, or otherwise, to regulation of distance education. We refer our readers to our quote from an anonymous Chancellor earlier in this summary.

We also suggest that the platform for these discussions could be the Standing Committee of Presidents (SCOP) annual meetings. This group is representative of numerous nations and has the capacity to develop and provide agreed benchmarks. It could do so using a facilitated approach and potentially across borders, which may diminish concerns about colonialist imposition of what constitutes 'best regulation'. Perhaps rather, it is about developing an agreed set of standards that can then be supported by ICDE as an organisation. ICDE should attempt to draw upon its membership and address needs as identified by them, rather than impose a way forward. For example, if a critique of the policy of regulation in Sweden were to be undertaken, it would be expected that appropriate Swedes would be involved, rather than this being 'done' to the Swedish people. It is far too simplistic and potentially damaging to problematize others without consideration of suitable engagement strategies. ICDE could also draw upon International groups such as those mentioned in this document to assist in this exercise.

From our own investigation through the country and institutional case studies, a second significant realisation emerged. The data revealed that most institutions have limited public strategies or specific policy frameworks underpinning their distance education programs. Nevertheless, the case studies documented within the study reveal some well-executed implementations within organisations.

1. The investigation of the formal literature and desktop scan for this project revealed that there is a lack of reporting and rigorous documentation of the impact, even in a general sense, of regulatory frameworks on the provision of distance education. In the absence of better reporting, it remains unclear whether existing regulatory structures and legal frameworks are robust enough to deal with accelerating change in the education market, especially the diversification of education providers, the development of new ways of delivering education, the globalisation of education and the maintenance of standards.

2. Data from our twenty-four country surveys revealed that distance education operates with or without regulatory frameworks, which are not a sole factor inhibiting the operation or development of distance education. Individual institutions, as demonstrated within the in-depth case studies, have developed their own governance practices and procedures sufficiently for these purposes. However, it should be noted that cultural sensitivity can also inhibit a nation's willingness to be identified as otherwise in public forums.

3. Current regulatory frameworks and processes are not necessarily constraining development in distance education.

4. Variance in internet access and connectivity inhibits the use of technology for distance education. Trends in mobile phone ownership and usage, and perhaps other devices, show promise in some countries, but have little impact in others.

5. Mobility and transportability of qualifications will increasingly be an issue.

6. The consortium were unable to assess whether the stability of legislation and policy (tendency for change), the effect of the accreditation and other regulatory requirements on distance education and the flexibility and transparency of the regulatory frameworks were likely to support good practice in education provision, decision-making and accountability.

7. Regulatory frameworks should be understood within their cultural context and do not on their own constrain or facilitate development in distance education.

8. As political and socio economic imperatives alter, the tendency for change within countries affects whether the regulatory frameworks that currently exist are sustainable in all countries and will support good practices in education provision, decision-making and accountability. There is no doubt that International agencies (such as UNESCO or ICDE) and numerous quality assurance organisations and trade agreements across the region have an enormous role to play.

9. Ethically, this study can only report what was found and, unless the voice of the institutions is not captured respectfully, there appears to be little about the regulatory framework (or lack of it) that hinders distance education. Rather, it is other factors, such as the interpretation of law and regulations, resourcing, government mechanisms, level of wealth, ICT infrastructure and capability, capacity and skills that are likely to be the barrier to expansion of online and distance education.

Lessons learned

- The biggest impediment to the project was that the purpose and audience of the project needed clarification in order to be able to constrain the scope of the pilot, which was too large and ill-defined.

  Firstly, the legislative framework itself is complex, multi-level covering acts of parliament, policy, rules, governance and funding structures. The multiple levels of regulation and types of interacting regulation mean that a broad range of regulation had to be located and collated.

  Secondly, a simple comparison of similarities and differences in regulatory frameworks would not answer questions about what and how regulation impacts on DE. Legislative impact is much more a question of interpretation, compliance and enforcement. There are two aspects to assessing legislative impact. One involves a legal/paralegal appraisal of the potential impacts of regulatory frameworks, based solely on the legislation and its interplay with other legislation at various levels. Assessment of actual impact is much trickier. The reasons for expansion or contraction of online and distance education are multi-factorial. To identify how legislation affords or restrains online and distance education would require isolating its contribution from that of other factors that could result in the same outcomes. Therefore, to understand any similarities or differences in regulatory frameworks or impact at other than a superficial level, and certainly to accredit differences in impact to those similarities or differences in frameworks, which is much more difficult, requires understanding the context – international, regional, national, economic, historic, cultural and so on, as well as mechanisms for enforcement and the status of compliance. This meant a very broad range of information had to be collated.

- Because of the scope of information to be collated and the difficulty in locating information, particularly for smaller countries, the number of countries included was too large to be comfortably achieved within the project's budget and timeframes.

- Future pilots should be cognisant of extensive and intensive person hours for locating, verifying, analysing and editing information. For example, researching, building, editing, copyediting and uploading country profiles took 25 hours per profile. This task alone took 600 hours for 24 countries.

- Future work should be cognisant that developing relationships and gaining commitment takes time.
- Considerable time also needs to be spent ensuring cultural and political sensitivity is addressed and managed respectfully.
- More time needs to be allowed for gaining commitment to complete the case studies due to the time it takes to overcome language barriers and establish deep and trusting relationships. Contact needs to be initiated with an 'in-country' resource person to add validity to the profile development process, and preferably one external to any of the institutions, who may be less impeded by 'correctness protocols'. While personal contacts proved useful, they were insufficient for successful approaches in all cases. Repeated attempts at contact were made with some institutions, but there was a lack of response or suspicion about use and representation of data.
- Resources and time permitting, our project team would have liked to have done a member-checking approach as adopted by Re.ViCa. (http://revica.europace.org/p12.html).

Recommendations to ICDE

- A tighter focus and better definition of some aspects of this study would clarify the terms of reference and greatly benefit any future continuation of the project. Suggested areas for review include:
  - ▷ Refinement and agreement of the definition and scope of online and distance education
  - ▷ The expected bounds of the regulatory frameworks to be considered need to be explicit, as a diverse regulatory environments impact on the implementation and development of online and distance education
  - ▷ Explicit nomination of the stakeholders at whom the information is aimed
  - ▷ Clear identification of boundaries of future data collection (relevancy to purpose)
  - ▷ Consideration of the para-legal/legal analysis skills necessary for comparison of regulations and assessment of their impact, especially given the complexities of interplay between the various legislative levels: local, state, national, regional and international.
- What does the online resource add to what exists? There is considerable data available from sources such as UNESCO, COL, Re.ViCa and the CIA that should not be replicated, but rather aggregated in some form. How will the ICDE online resource differentiate itself from existing data sets and representation?

- Anecdotal opinion about constraints could potentially be verified through a deeper grounded approach to the methodology. For example, anecdotal evidence of constraints is unlikely to be validated through survey approaches, due to cultural and political sensitivity issues, and this needs to be taken into account. Some contacts were only willing to speak 'off the record'. ICDE might consider, with permission of its members across regions, the development of a 4-6 page policy brief, as appropriate, targeting governments and policy-makers, groups such as SEAMO, UNESCO and EU and perhaps rectors/VCs.
- Caution is necessary when drawing assumptions about barriers, and no assumption should be made that inclusion of regulatory frameworks are indeed required. It is important that cultural and political sensitivities are observed and that a broad range of opinions across the region are sought.
- Refinement of the data collection instrument may be necessary. The team collated and refined existing instruments, then took advice. Feedback invariably advised expanding on certain topics. Some compromise and a more targeted survey may be possible with a more directed project and time for validation of the new instrument. Amendments need to be balanced with obtaining sufficient contextual information to be able to interpret the results meaningfully.
- We recommend asking institutional members of ICDE to contribute profiles and case studies, with appropriate recognition as a benefit of being a member. The invitation to participate being sent via the President of ICDE would add importance and veracity to the request and likely improve response rates. This community approach could reduce costs considerably and provide for a sustainable approach to extending the project. This could also enhance the ICDE membership engagement and involvement with ICDE.
- Ongoing support of the ICDE Secretariat for maintaining and monitoring the online resource requires some thought. The team originally suggested an open online approach (via a wiki) so that members could update their own profiles, thus reducing the intensive maintenance hours. We would recommend that this be considered.

1 INTRODUCTION— PROJECT CONTEXT, AIMS, APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

CONTEXT

Education worldwide is transforming rapidly at local, national and international levels. There are many driving factors fuelling increased demand for online and distance education (DE) across the globe:

- the growing importance of the flow and aggregation of knowledge;
- political initiatives for inclusion and wider access to higher education;
- expanding markets and increased international competition;
- the mobilization of skilled labour;
- regional integration and globalization processes that provide scope for professional mobility and greater potential for cross-border movement of goods, services, capital and persons;
- the consequent growing demand for relevant continuing education and training, or what is known as lifelong learning;
- diversification of higher education providers; and
- the continuous development of information and communication technologies heralding new approaches to education delivery.

However, declining public funding in many national contexts and often inadequate financial and administrative capacity to respond to this growing demand have pushed much educational development outside the public education sector, for example, through private education and training organizations and employers. New regulatory instruments, in addition to national processes of accreditation and quality assurance, have become necessary (Butterfield et al. 1999). Furthermore, some of the recent regional and international agreements, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), potentially have strong implications for DE development. The rapid uptake of distance learning (Allen & Seaman, 2010; IBIS, 2009) and the forecast continued growth in distance education as a key form of education delivery (Allen & Seaman, 2010; IBIS, 2009; Jung, 2008) highlight different aspects of education, such as mobility and access to technology, resources and advisory services, that make appropriate accreditation and quality assurance processes that directly address these emerging issues long overdue. Hence, as identified by the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), a review of the state of regulatory frameworks for distance education would indeed be timely to encourage and to inform legislative change and policy development at an International level.

Structure of the report

This report provides an overview of the work completed by the project partners.

It is divided into ten parts, with this first section providing an overview of the project and its processes, serving as a brief introduction to the context of the research, research design and research questions.

Section Two details the project methodology and key concepts.

Section Three provides an introduction to key concepts and justification for data variables.

Section Four presents the results.

Section Five contains summary country profiles.

Section Six discusses the analysis of the national and regional context and characteristics.

Section Seven compares and contrasts similarities and differences between regulatory frameworks in study region.

Conclusions and recommendations of the project team for ICDE are considered in ***Section Eight***.

Sections Nine *and* ***Ten*** of the report list the references and the appendices respectively.

THE PROJECT

Introduction

ICDE engaged the collaboration of DEHub, AUQA, INQAAHE and ACODE to undertake a review of formal and informal literature of regulatory frameworks for DE in the Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region. ICDE requested that the existing laws, policies, rules and regulations related to DE in the region be collated and posted in an open source database. Our project proposed to compare the frameworks of countries within the region for similarities and differences; in particular, highlighting those elements that hinder development in distance education. Our comparative analysis would be discussed in the context of other recent research into regulation of distance education. Case studies would provide examples of distance and online education regulatory practice currently extant within the region. It was planned to publish the outcomes of the project on the ICDE website, with links to the websites of the collaborative partners to ensure convenient access for the various stakeholders with an interest in regulatory frameworks for DE. This would provide a portable, scalable resource. Other deliverables from the project included a final report providing a contextual overview of distance education in the region and outlining the project, research methods and analytical results, and a comprehensive online resource about the regulatory frameworks for online and distance education in the region.

Purpose and objectives

ICDE established the objectives of this pilot as:

1. identify the main regulatory frameworks that apply to distance and online education in one region of the world;
2. collate the existing laws, policies, rules and regulations related to distance and online education in that region in a database;
3. compare the frameworks of all countries within the region and identify similarities and differences; and
4. undertake case studies as examples of distance and online education practice under the regulations currently extant within the region.

Project approach

The project consisted of a literature review, analysis of the different regulatory contexts informed by institutional case studies and presentation of an online resource collating regulatory information for the study region.

The main project activity stretched over ten months, from the development of the research design, profile templates and questionnaires, the selection of case studies and start of data collation in December 2010 to the report writing phase in October–December 2011.

Governance

The governance structure of the project is outlined in Figure 1. A Project Board made up of one representative from each collaborating partner had oversight of the project.

The Project Board was supported by the Advisory Group. Membership of the Advisory Group was decided jointly with ICDE and included:

- Dr Bernard Loing (ICDE permanent delegate to UNESCO)
- Professor Tian Belawati (Rector of Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia and member of the ICDE Executive Committee)
- Professor Marta Mena (ICDE Executive)
- Professor Jim Taylor (Australian Digital Futures Institute, University of Southern Queensland)
- Professor Denise Kirkpatrick (Professor of Teaching and Learning and Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Quality at the Open University)
- Wayne Mackintosh (founder of WikiEducator).

The Project Team (see Appendix A for brief biographies) was led by Dr Rosalind James (University of New England) and consisted of Professor Belinda Tynan (University of New England, now University of Southern Queensland), Dr Stephen Marshall (ACODE, Victoria University of Wellington), Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby (ACODE, Massey University), Dr Len Webster (AUQA), Richard Lewis (INQAAHE) and various research assistants at the University of New England and Victoria University Wellington.

Originally, Dr David Woodhouse was on the Project board and Project Team, representing both AQUA and INQAAHE. When he left the project, he was replaced by Dr Len Webster representing AQUA and Richard Lewis representing INQAAHE.

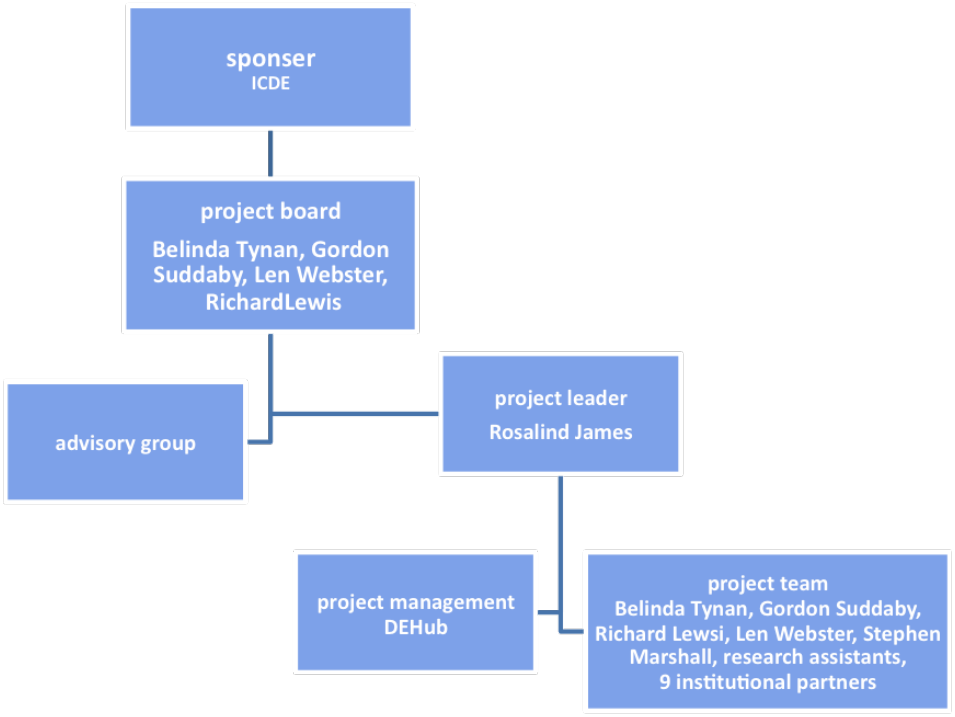


Figure 1: Project Organisational Chart

2 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

ISSUES BEING ADDRESSED

This project sought to assess policy and regulatory frameworks for DE for one defined region of the world. The main questions underpinning our research were:

- whether existing regulatory structures and legal frameworks are robust enough to deal with accelerating change in the education market, especially the diversification of education providers, the development of new ways of delivering education, the globalisation of education and the maintenance of standards;
- whether the stability of legislation and policy (tendency for change), the effect of the accreditation and other regulatory requirements on DE and the flexibility and transparency of the regulatory frameworks are likely to support good practice in education provision, decision-making and accountability;
- whether individual institutions have developed their own governance practices and procedures sufficiently for these purposes; and
- whether current regulatory frameworks and processes constrain or facilitate development in distance education

RESEARCH DESIGN

The project was designed with five main phases: literature review and data collation; design and construction of a pilot online resource that would present information about regulatory frameworks and data entry; analysis of the different regulatory contexts; institutional case studies as practice exemplars; and preparation of reports on findings and outcomes of the research.

The literature provided guidance about the likely enablers and barriers for distance education, and the factors identified from previous research became the drivers of our data collection strategy.

This study considered regulatory frameworks in play at international, regional, national and local levels, but also at the institutional level. Such an approach acknowledges that institutional types and profiles, the influences that shape them, the values that institutions attach to distance education and the policies and methods chosen may differ from those prioritised and enshrined in regulatory frameworks at higher levels. Therefore, as determinants of institutional strategic and policy directions, such factors can themselves be either an impediment to or facilitator of successful DE implementation.

Country profiles were developed to provide a context setting for the institutional case studies and added substance, helping in interpretation of the quantitative data. Both open and closed questions were posed in order to achieve depth. This combination of data collection methods offers a valid and reliable approach that allows a deeper understanding of how the regulatory frameworks impact on institutional implementation of distance education.

SCOPE

Study area

This project explored the regulatory frameworks for online and distance higher education within the Asia/Pacific region, limiting this to some key members of the ASEAN and the Pacific Island Forum nations. This would involve a survey of existing literature and regulatory agency material for the following countries: ASEAN: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Pacific Islands Forum countries of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji (suspended from ASEAN on 2 May 2009), Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia.

This region provided a pilot study area that was sufficiently diverse to offer opportunities for comparison. It included large and small scale nations, which have differing operational contexts, advantages, challenges and constraints. Distance education is a priority area of cooperation among many of the countries in this region. Therefore, the various perspectives available within the study area allowed the database to be piloted and assessed for appropriateness in different national regulatory contexts, as well as in institutional contexts that vary with regard to ownership, size, technology base, integration (of open and distance learning with other methods) and collaborative relationships.

Definition of terms

In the recent environment of wide-scale adoption of technology and online modes of delivery for all students regardless of their location, there has been a lack of clarity about what constitutes distance learning. 'Distance learning' is a generic term used to describe a wide range of delivery methodologies that institutions use to provide access to their programmes. For the purpose of this pilot, distance education, also variously referred to as distance learning, e-learning, online learning, online education or distributed learning (Guri-Rozenblit, 2009), was defined in its broadest sense, as education or training courses delivered to remote (off-campus) sites via paper, audio, video (live or pre-recorded) or computer technologies, including both synchronous (i.e. simultaneous) and asynchronous (i.e. not simultaneous) instruction. Distance education courses that require a physical on-site presence for any reason, including the taking of examinations, are considered to be a hybrid or blended course of study. We take distance learning to include such blended learning when

the distance learning part is in the majority. Blended models are now the most common form of distance education. The project team acknowledge the limitation of the definition settled upon, and any future project will need to give further consideration to developing an appropriate definition of online and distance education.

Distance education can be offered domestically, internationally or transnationally. The latter two concepts are also without consensus definitions. Transnational education is generally considered to be education in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based (McBurnie & Pollock, 1998; UNESCO and Council of Europe 2001). This definition can be applied loosely to allow the inclusion of education that is provided by collaborative arrangements, such as franchising, twinning, joint degrees where study programmes are supplied by another partner, articulation programmes, as well as non-collaborative arrangements, such as distance education (with or without local support), branch campuses, off-shore institutions and Corporate universities (Bernado 2003).

The term 'internationalisation' means different things in different countries, in different institutions and for different individuals. The classic definition of higher education internationalisation is the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, learning and research environment or delivery of education (Knight 2003, 2004; Knight & de Wit 1995). Internationalisation is usually associated with international student mobility/exchange programmes; teacher development and exchange; research collaborations; internationalising curricula as foreign language studies or for building international perspectives.

Distance education programmes are generally targeted at the adult population for school equivalency, technical and vocational education or professional development, and formal tertiary qualifications at graduate and post-graduate levels. However, open and distance learning is also used in non-formal education and community development sectors.

The distance education sector is subject to varying laws, policies, rules, regulations and practices imposed by government legislators, quality assurance and accreditation agencies, professional associations, academic associations, student bodies, credential evaluation and recognition bodies, regional and international organisations, and educational institutions themselves via their internal strategic and operational planning. Regulatory control in non-academic areas, such as pastoral care and fee protection or regimes in the area of tax and exchange regulations, can also affect the development of distance education systems. Consideration of all these different aspects of distance education was beyond the scope of our review of regulatory frameworks, which focussed more narrowly on international agreements impacting on education, national, state and local regulations and policy, quality assurance mechanisms (if any) and ICT regulation and policy (where this information was available).

ASSUMPTIONS

- Each country and case study university will have varying policy and/or regulatory frameworks that could impact on final recommendations.
- The chosen study area is sufficiently diverse to offer opportunities for comparison.
- The case study method adopted will identify the contribution of differing contextual factors in a region with disparate country sizes and characteristics.
- The limited funds and restricted timeframe available for the pilot could potentially impact the quality of data collected.

DATA GATHERING STRATEGY

Three sets of data were used to illuminate the different regulatory and policy approaches to distance learning in higher education at national levels in 24 countries in the region, as well as at institutional levels in nine different national contexts:

1. General background data about each country, providing basic demographic, education and ICT usage statistics, plus an overview of the geography, history, governance, education system and development and status of distance education.
2. Background data on laws, regulations, administration, funding sources, accreditation and quality assurance bodies, international agreements, as well as major national higher education policy documents, and ICT regulation and policy.

   These two sets of data were combined to develop a country profile (see Appendix B).
3. Detailed institutional data presented as a case study. For each participating institution, one staff member produced a case study, following a common structure—a detailed, user-friendly questionnaire (mostly "tickable" but also including many open questions) provided a guideline (see Appendix C).

The initial investigation phase provided background pedagogical, legal and topical information as a foundation for the subsequent content and resource preparation. The key factors and criteria identified in previous studies (e.g. Berge, 1998; Gellman-Danley and Fetzner, 1998; King, Nugent, Russell, Eich and Lacy 2000; UNESCO/Council of Europe 2001; UNESCO 2007) as affecting distance education implementation became the basis for the development of the data collation templates for both the country profiles and the institutional case studies. Further explanation and justification for the selection of data to be collated can be found in Section 3. These templates were used to collate information from a variety of sources.

SEARCH STRATEGY

Our review of distance education regulation primarily considered three types of literature: government legislation and policy documents; published literature (anything with an ISBN or ISSN number) and grey literature (reports and documents available in the public domain, such as on the worldwide web, that do not have an ISBN or ISSN). As well as collating data on the laws, policies, rules, regulations and practices relating to distance education, an emphasis was placed on existing literature reviews, regulatory evaluations or impact studies, country and institutional characteristics, regional education statistics, identification and definition of all key terms, data fields and key issues to be considered. All areas that can be regulated were considered: granting of permission to operate, recognition of awards, independent or collaborative operation, admission criteria, courses offered, funding and student fees, student support and language instruction.

Country data

A defining list of easily accessible, public domain sources was settled upon (see Appendix B) and used consistently to extract basic data on the population, economic and educational development for each country in the study area from which a country profile was developed to provide a context in which to analyse and discuss the distance education regulatory frameworks.

The most the most current and best-sourced information was selected from the data sources and synthesised to complete a summary table and the narrative overview sections.

Country profiles were developed to provide a context setting for the institutional case studies and added substance, helping in interpretation of the quantitative data. Both open and closed questions were posed in order to achieve depth. The combination of data aimed to provide a deeper understanding of how regulatory frameworks impact on the organisation and development of distance education.

Regulatory data

In general, the search strategies employed followed a regular pattern. The first step was to visit the Re.ViCa site (**R**eviewing (traces of) **E**uropean **Vi**rtual **Ca**mpuses (2007-2009) Project (http://Re.ViCa .europace.org/) to ascertain the range of information available for each country. After reviewing the material from this source, a search was made using Google for the official Web sites of national governments. The aim was to locate the sites of the Ministry or Department of Education or equivalent at the national level. Where such official sites were available, it was usually possible to identify major institutions engaged in the provision of distance education and specific agencies with responsibilities for quality assurance. If there was a separate ministry or department of higher education, that

was also targeted. The next step was to visit the Web sites of individual institutions and official agencies to harvest current details. Information provided from these sources was also supplemented by the sites of international associations, such as INQAAHAE, which provided information on institutional and government agency membership of such associations.

UNESCO has a page of official statistics at http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco that provided supplementary information. In some instances, in order to meet the data requirements of the country profile template, it was necessary to extend the search to official and semi-official reports published on the sites of international bodies, such as the UNESCO or the Asian Development Bank, NGO and aid agency reports.

Information recovered as a result of targeted searches was supplemented by broader searches.

Table 1 presents a 'thesaurus' of the various terms that were combined as search terms. The [country name] was combined with a qualifier from the second column plus a qualifier from the third column; for example, "Tuvalu distance education legislation".

Experiment revealed that a small number of search strings reliably returned useful information when used with Google. These included:

- "distance education" [country name]
- "distance education" [country name] filetype:pdf
- history "distance education" [country name]
- "open university" [country name]
- reform (university OR universities OR "higher education") [country name]
- reform (university OR universities OR "higher education") [country name] filetype:pdf

The operator 'filetype:pdf' was used to isolate higher quality resources in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format.

Table 2: Thesaurus of search terms

[country name]	education	quality assurance
	higher education	accreditation
	distance education	regulations
	e-learning	regulatory frameworks
	online education	legislation
	online learning	government statutes
	flexible learning	policy
	blended learning	ICT
	open learning	ICT initiatives
	distributed education	technology
	open university	history
	life-long learning	reform

CASE STUDIES

In a study area with such disparate state sizes, 'best practice' would most likely underplay the contribution of differing contextual factors in shaping educational policy and practice. The collation of case studies offered a more subtle, mediated and contextualised way of sharing experience and learning that takes account of differences across the region (e.g. Crossley and Watson, 2003). SITESm@ (http://sitesm2.org) offer an excellent guiding format for this aspect of the proposal.

The Case Studies are reflective of each country where a significant distance education institution is located and will illustrate institutional approaches to meeting regulatory and quality assurance requirements for distance education within their country. The cases are based on a common research framework. A questionnaire to audit institutional characteristics and overall policy and quality arrangements in the studied DE institutions was developed to ensure that consistent basic data was collected in order to facilitate comparisons between the institutions (see Appendix C for Case Study Questionnaire). The questions were the same for all of the participants across the nine universities. Ethics clearance for the institutional questionnaire was given by UNE ethics Committee (see Appendix D for Consent Forms, Participant Information Sheet and Ethics Approval).

The survey questions addressed a wide range of dimensions of institutional characteristics, including directional differences (e.g. with respect to missions); functional diversity relating to the relative emphasis on teaching, research, innovation, continuing education and other services; student profile (in terms of socio-economic, ethnic, international, gender, religious,

full-time/part-time learners balance); staff profile; governance structures, institutional target groups, subject and programme range, funding sources, internal reward structures and quality assurance criteria. A subset of this information was summarised into an institutional profile to be accessible online.

Four major broad objectives were adopted for the case study research:

- to analyze the principal forms and distinctive features of DE higher education in 9 institutions in relation to regulatory and quality assurance policies;
- to identify current approaches and good practices in regulation and quality assurance of DE provision;
- to identify the impact of regulatory framework on the DE system in terms of quality, access, equity and funding; and
- to identify common effective regulatory provisions that apply across institutions and countries.

The limitation of the case study methodology is that it sometimes reflects the opinions of only one staff member in an institution, or only one institution in a country, and thus does not necessarily give a representative sense of the values and instruments used to regulate distance education implementation.

Participants

Given time and resources, a comprehensive or sophisticated survey was precluded. A purposive sample of 15 institutions across the ASEAN was selected based on each having distance education as a primary delivery mode. The choice of institutions asked to participate in the case studies aimed to achieve not only a geographical spread across the study area, but also a mix between smaller and larger, private and public funding models, as well as different cultural heritage in parent education systems that may have influenced development of education.

The institutions invited to participate in the study were

Australia
University of New England
University of Southern Queensland
Central Queensland University
Charles Sturt University

Indonesia
Universitas Terbuka in Indonesia

Malaysia
Wawasan University
Open University of Malaysia

Thailand
Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

Vietnam
Ho Chi Min Open University
Hanoi Open University

Fiji
University of the South Pacific

New Zealand
Massey University
The Open Polytechnic

Papua New Guinea
Open University of Papua New Guinea

New Caledonia
National Centre for Distance Education (CNED)

ANALYSIS

The analysis focused on developing a system that identified the key similarities and differences among the different policy contexts in the region. The collated country and institutional profiles were the key data sets interrogated for similarities and differences. Factors identified as important by UNESCO, Re.ViCa and COL were drawn upon as guiding lenses, although these were not intended to limit the possibility of new substantive themes emerging during the analysis. The analysis subsequently investigated how regulatory frameworks impact on these factors. Barriers to the development of distance education were considered in terms of quality, equity, access and funding and were explored through the review of legislation, quality assurance and accreditation and institutional strategic management.

The simplified comparative analysis (Ragin & Griffin, 1994) informed by the previous work of Re.ViCa, UNESCO, COL (2007) and others (e.g. Abdous 2009; Holt & Challis 2007; Mishra 2007) asked:

> whether existing regulatory structures and legal frameworks are robust enough to deal with accelerating change in the education market, especially the diversification of education providers, the development of new ways of delivering education, the globalisation of education and the maintenance of standards;
>
> whether the stability of legislation and policy (tendency for change), the effect of the accreditation and other regulatory requirements on DE and the flexibility and transparency of the regulatory frameworks are likely to support of good practices in education provision, decision-making and accountability;
>
> whether individual institutions have developed their own governance practices and procedures sufficiently for these purposes; andwhether current regulatory frameworks and processes constrain or facilitate development in distance education.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Governments and their agencies;
- state-owned and private distance teaching institutions (correspondence schools and their modern counterparts);
- open universities;
- dual mode and conventional universities and colleges;
- researchers, academics, teachers, students and the general public;
- educational broadcasters, video production centres etc;
- satellite transmission and programming services;
- community-based institutions and organizations;
- professional organizations;
- human resource development and training departments in businesses/industries;
- software industries (publishers, computer and multimedia software companies);
- network operators and providers of network services (e.g. telecom services, ISPs);
- national consortia and networks of institutions; and
- international consortia and programmes.

Figure 2: Stakeholders in distance education

3 INTRODUCTION TO KEY CONCEPTS AND JUSTIFICATION FOR DATA VARIABLES

In an era of decreasing state funding for higher education and increasing demand for enrolments, particularly in developing countries, there is growing interest in the use of online and distance learning at the tertiary level to extend access and increase flexible learning opportunities. Regulatory and policy frameworks can have a major impact on the introduction and expansion of online and distance education. However, there are also other factors that can determine how effective any implementation of regulations or policy will be in encouraging online and distance education. This section discusses how the guiding questions and concepts of this study were derived.

COUNTRY PROFILES

UNESCO (UNESCO/Council of Europe 2001; UNESCO 2007) have already identified lack of funding and problems of sustained support; availability of human resources with sufficient competence and motivation, particularly concerning distance learning methodology and technology; technological infrastructure; and lack of strategic planning and coordination, including full specification of goals and priorities as potential barriers to the implementation of distance education. Therefore, these factors were incorporated as data fields in our data collation.

Barriers to the development of online and distance learning have been reported as including:

- the frequent under-resourcing and underestimation of development costs;
- the frequent lack of commitment and incentive to change on the part of institutions and academic staff;
- the lack of legislative frameworks on the part of many countries to cover online and distance learning;
- the need to develop accreditation, recognition and quality assurance procedures covering all forms of study;
- the insufficiency of state support, especially of financial support (Szucs and Jenkins, 1999).

This project has attempted to canvass these issues when collating information for the country profiles and collecting institutional data.

In addition to the regulations extant at a national and state/local level, international and regional agreements that might have a bearing on

distance education were noted. National policies can also provide an indication of government aspirations, values and priorities in relation to education, in general, and sometimes more specifically to distance education.

Participation in international and regional bodies was also recorded as they may have a role in planning. Often they are an important information source: on policies, existing institutions and structures, methodologies, technologies, learning material and other resources, research findings and assistance, sources of funding and possibilities for international cooperation.

Policy statements and regional/international programmes of action can help support and guide developments at national level. A decade ago, few in higher education would have mentioned any trade agreement – global, regional or bilateral—as having any impact on higher education, including its quality and the mobility of its graduates. Now, one third of world trade takes place within free trade agreements, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO); two thirds if the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is included (Shiff and Winters, 2003).

The demand for transnational education has made education one of the top globally traded services (Martin & Bray, 2009). Trade agreements are both driving and responding to the global marketplace, the rise of regionalism and the determination of countries to assure that they remain competitive in the 21st century.

Central to these free trade agreements are issues of investment and mobility, including the qualifications of professionals and the assurance of quality of general academic degrees (Ziguras 2003). The need for national and regional qualifications frameworks has been frequently raised (e.g. Marginson, 2004; Martin & Bray 2009; Stella & Bhushan, 2011). As labour seeks to move around the region in response to various economic push and pull factors, workers can be handicapped by lack of recognition of their qualifications. Students wishing to improve their qualifications are disadvantaged by the need to repeat courses or lack of recognition for courses that they studied in a different country, or even in a different institution in the same country. Therefore, regulatory frameworks that support the necessary quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms to promote the mobility agendas of students and professionals are of prime concern.

Based on the *Trends 2010* institutional questionnaires (Sursock & Smidt 2010), enhanced internal quality processes and cooperation with other higher education institutions were both important changes to institutional development in the past ten years, indicating how aware European higher education providers are of the need for effective institutional steering in order to be attractive internationally.

As online and distance learning has gained wider acceptance within the higher education sector, it has become increasingly evident that quality assurance guidelines developed for traditional face-to-face academic programs need to be reassessed and adapted to ensure they are relevant in this new, emerging learning environment (Roffe, 2002). Many aspects of online learning are similar to those found in a traditional on-campus setting and can be monitored in a similar fashion; others require a different quality assurance framework. The biggest challenge for the online and distance education is the maintenance of high standards in an environment characterised by a complex community of students and faculty, spanning multiple time zones, cultures, nationalities and varying levels of technological capability and availability.

Sursock & Smidt's study (2010) identified Internationalisation as the third, most important driver of institutional change in the previous three years and expected it to move to first place within the ensuing five years. The *Trends 2010* data indicate that an increasing number of European institutions have begun to address the challenge of attracting and teaching a more diversified student body. Many have introduced more inclusive and responsive institutional policies. Recognition of credit transfer remains a central issue in the promotion of mobility, but there are other obstacles to mobility that also need attention, such as visa or language requirements, compressed degrees, lack of funding, lack of harmonisation of academic calendars across Europe and so on (Marginson, 2004). Sursock & Smidt (2010) further report that despite talk of a shift towards a student-centred approach and to a stress on student attainment, the importance of student support services has been relatively ignored as a policy priority. Most of these issues are similar and just as important for an online and distance education context.

Globalisation and the imperatives of the knowledge society are affecting higher education almost everywhere in the world. The European findings prompt the question, as student mobility within the Asia/Pacific region increases (Stella & Bhushan, 2011), is there evidence that policymakers at the regional level are looking to encourage this mobility—that is, are they addressing issues directly related to cross-border academic travel and cross-border education, such as the recognition of foreign credentials, the harmonization of national quality standards, the transfer of academic credit and provision of student support services?

While quality assurance is an important aspect of a viable global regulatory framework, a focus on quality-assurance mechanisms can neglect or obscure other weaknesses in the education industry; for example, educational and cultural aspects of online an distance education, the political economy, the problem of inadequate technological capacities, the need for innovations in pedagogical methods, the absence of linguistic plurality in online programs, the mono-cultural character of existing online curricula, the asymmetries between foreign providers and local educational authorities and institutions in the Asia-Pacific nations (Marginson, 2004).

Governance protocols and administration are other factors that can affect the capacity of governments to deliver education as an essential service. The cost of education and access to funding also influences access to vocational and higher education.

Government awareness of the importance of ICT for national education is imperative. Not only is ICT vitally important to economic development and participation in the global information society, but ICT-based learning and distance education can play a crucial role in broadening access to education for the whole society. Therefore, in addition to policy focused on the telecommunications infrastructure supporting the internet, the policies and laws directly regulating the internet also have an impact on the potential of ICT-based distance education. This expanded the regulatory frameworks that were considered and recorded.

This is particularly important in the Pacific, where the ICT sector continues to be very complex and diverse. There are over 20 individual countries in this region and each represents a different set of unique environmental conditions and stage of development. The small-scale and scattered nature of the Pacific island economies, difficult environments and lack of supporting infrastructures, such as electricity and fixed land lines, all impose significant challenges (Crossley, Bray & Packer, 2009). Geography, population and the availability of learning content and appropriate platforms add to issues like language, culture and politics (Marginson, 2004).

In 2003, UNESCO Bangkok conducted a meta-survey of the status of ICT use in education across Asia and the Pacific. Not surprisingly, the survey found a great deal of variation in the nature and extent of technology integration in the more than two dozen countries surveyed. Specifically, "countries [were] at different stages of both development and implementation in the areas of policy formulation, ICT infrastructure development and access to it, content development, programme initiatives and the training provided for education personnel" (Farrell and Wachholz 2003, p. 265). The differences arise not only from differences in the countries' financial and human resources, but also from differences in policymaking with regard to ICT in education. Farrell and Wachholz (2003, p. 267) sum up these policy-related differences as follows:

> [T]he countries are arrayed along a continuum of stages with regard to policies pertaining to the integration of ICT into their education systems. While all of them have stated that the development of ICT capacity is important to the future of their countries, fewer have grappled with the policy questions as they relate to ICT applications in education — and many of those that have lack the resources to implement their strategies, a recurrent theme throughout the reports. *This 'lack of resources' reflects, however, weaknesses of existing policies and the need to improve them.* (italics supplied)

Table 2: Policy Analysis Framework for Distance Education
(Table 1 in King, Nugent, Russell, Eich and Lacy 2000. Adapted from Gellman-Danley and Fetzner, 1998; Berge, 1998)

Policy Area	Key Issues
Academic	Calendar, Course integrity, Transferability, Transcripts, Student/Course evaluation, Admission standards, Curriculum/Course approval, Accreditation, Class cancellations , Course/Program/Degree availability, Recruiting/Marketing
Governance/ Administration/ Fiscal	Tuition rate, Technology fee, FTE's, Administration cost, State fiscal regulations, Tuition disbursement, Space, Single versus multiple board oversight, Staffing
Faculty	Compensation and workload, Development incentives, Faculty training, Congruence with existing union contracts, Class monitoring, Faculty support, Faculty evaluation
Legal	Intellectual property, Faculty, Student and institutional liability
Student Support Services	Advisement, Counseling, Library access, Materials delivery, Student training, Test proctoring, Videotaping, Computer accounts, Registration, Financial aid, Labs
Technical	Systems reliability, Connectivity/access, Hardware/software, Setup concerns, Infrastructure, Technical support (staffing), Scheduling, Costs
Cultural	Adoption of innovations, Acceptance of on-line/distance teaching, Understanding of distance education (what works at a distance), Organizational values

Apart from infrastructure issues, a national policy needs to cover tariffs, market structure of operators, plans for networks in rural areas, and new services and human resources development. In addition, every country will also have to deal with the impact of convergence of media, telecommunications and data.

Because infrastructure, applications, services, economy, demographics, user knowledge and skills, costs, the regulatory environment and potentials are different in the different countries, each country needs to craft national policies in a number of areas that are integrated with other national plans and programmes.

The country profile template was designed to take into account this broad range of issues that might impinge upon the promotion of online and distance education. King, Nugent, Russell, Eich and Lacy (2000) identified seven policy areas (see Table 2) that they considered fundamental to developing and managing distance education efforts and which seemed

to be consistent across many sectors (VET, community learning, higher education). These informed the development of the data collation templates.

The completed country profiles are available online at http://icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/country_profiles and a summary of key points is included in Section 4 of this report.

CASE STUDIES

The factors identified in the literature as impacting on online and distance education at a national and regional level are equally relevant at an institutional level.

There was insufficient time for development and validation of a survey instrument, therefore, the case study questionnaire was compiled based on several large, pre-existing, validated surveys with questions selected and amended for their relevancy to distance education: Re.ViCa (2009) as the outputs of this project were to be integrated with the Re.ViCa project resources; Sursock & Smidt (2010), who examined the impact of the Bologna process in Europe; CHEPS (2008) and van Vught, Kaiser, File et al. (2010), who developed surveys to capture the diversity of higher education institutions for summary classification. The University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP) study seemed particularly appropriate since it is accompanied by the UMAP Credit Transfer System (UCTS), which is modelled on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), currently being expanded for exchange in the Asia-Pacific region.

The following pages provide a table of the institutional profile indicators developed during the UMAP project (van Vught, Kaiser, File et al. 2010), the rationale underpinning them and how they combine to provide a multivariate characterisation of higher education institutions in terms of their learning and teaching profile, student profile, research involvement, regional engagement, involvement in knowledge exchange and international orientation.

The potential and increasingly central place of ICT in online and distance education also prompted the collection of information on ICT capacity, availability and capability. Questions in the technology section were based on research by the project leader, Dr James, which is in preparation for publication.

teaching and learning profile

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
Degree level focus	The number of degrees awarded in the reference year, by level of degree. Qualifications comprise all levels including sub degree, bachelor, master, doctorate and other diplomas and certificates.	*doctorate focus* >= 5% of all qualifications awarded are doctorate degrees *master focus* >= 25% master degrees *bachelor focus* >=40% bachelor degrees *sub-degree focus* >= 5% sub-degree qualifications	The relative size of the various degree levels gives an indication of the focus of the profile of the HEI. Degrees are counted and not enrolment to avoid double counting and the biasing effect of 'eternal students'. Multiple focuses may be attributed.
Expenditure on teaching	% of total institutional expenditure dedicated to teaching activities in the reference year	> 40%: major 10 – 40%: substantial 1 and 10%: some 0: none	This indicator highlights the priority given to teaching activities, in relation to research and knowledge exchange
Orientation of degrees	The proportion of graduates (all levels combined) in three types of programs: general formative programs, programs leading to licensed/regulated professions, and other career-oriented programs	>33% graduates in general formative programs: *general formative focus* >33% graduates in programs leading to licensed/regulated professions: *licensed/regulated professional orientation* >33% graduates in other career-oriented programs: *other career-oriented focus* >33% graduates in two categories: *mixed orientation*	Programs leading to certified/ regulated professions are assumed to have a clear professional orientation. Professional orientation thus can be described as having a direct link to the needs of the labour market.
Range of subjects	The number of 8 broad subject areas in which qualifications are awarded	areas covered <=3 specialised 3< areas covered <=6 broad areas covered >6 comprehensive	The mix of subject offerings is an indicator of the width of the scope of activities of the HEI
	(education, engineering, social sciences, business and law, personal services, natural sciences and mathematics, humanities and arts, health and social service, agriculture)		

student profile

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
Distance learning students	Students enrolled in distance learning programs as % total number of students enrolled (all levels combined). Distant learning = courses not requiring physical on-site presence to receive education.	> 20%: predominant 10 – 20%: substantial 5 – 10%: some < 5%: none	Distance learning programs have distinct delivery characteristics. An institution that has relatively many students enrolled in distance learning programs is likely to have an opener attitude to its environment/ stakeholders.
Mature students	The number of students aged 30+ years (head-count, all levels combined) as % of total number of students enrolled (headcount, all levels combined)	> 20%: predominant 10 – 20%: substantial 5 – 10%: some < 5%: none	The proportion of adult learners is seen both as an indicator for involvement in life long learning and for the age distribution of the student body.
Part-time students	The number of students enrolled in part-time programs (headcount) as a % of total enrolment (headcount) Part-time = taking a course load or educational programme that requires less than 75% of a full-time commitment of time and resources.	> 20%: predominant 10 – 20%: substantial 5 – 10%: some < 5%: none	Part-time programs are a distinct character-istic of the way the programs are offered to students. An institution that has relatively many part time students enrolled is likely to have an opener attitude to its environment/ stakeholders.
Size of student body	The headcount number of students enrolled in all types of degrees and certificate programs.	very large: more than 30,000 large: between 15,000 and 30,000 medium sized: between 5,000 and 15,000 small: less than 5,000	A basic size indicator

research involvement

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
Doctorate production	The number of doctorate degrees awarded as a % of academic staff (FTE) Doctorate degrees comprise PhD degrees as well as professional doctorate degrees	> 1.5 major 0.75 - 1.5 substantial 0.1 - 0.75 some < 0.1 none	In many higher education systems, the 'production' of a doctorate degree is seen as a research intensive activity of a higher education institution (HEI). The doctorate thesis is, in most cases, a significant research publication.
Expenditure on research	The amount of money spent on research activities in the reference year as % of total expenditure	> 40%: major 10 – 40%: substantial 1 – 10%: some 0 none	Research expenditure is seen as a strong indicator for involvement in research cut-of points
Peer reviewed publications	Annual number of peer reviewed publications and other peer reviewed research outputs relative to the total number of academic staff (FTE)	> 2 major 1 - 2 substantial 0.1 - 1 some <0.1 none	The number of publications is seen as an important indicator for the involvement in research

regional engagement

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
First year bachelor students from the region	The number of first year bachelor students (headcount) from the region as a percentage of total number of first year bachelor students.	> 10% major 5 - 10% substantial 1 - 5% some 0 none	A HEI that draws many of its students from the region has a stronger relation with the region than a HEI with only few new entrants from the region.
Graduates working in the region	% graduates working in the region 2 years after graduation	> 10% major 5 - 10% substantial 1 - 5% some 0 none	A high proportion of graduates working in the region indicates a close relation between the higher education institution and the region
Importance of local/regional income sources	Income from regional/local sources as % of total income	> 10% major 5 - 10% substantial 1 - 5% some 0 none	A high proportion of income from regional/local sources indicates a intense relationship between the higher education institution and the region.

involvement in knowledge exchange

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
Cultural activities	Number of official exhibitions, official events and conferences, (co)-organised by the institution or a department of it, that are open to the general public, per 1000 FTE academic staff	> 100 major 50 - 100 substantial 1 - 50 some 0 none	The number of exhibitions, concerts and performances is in arts and architecture a generally accepted indicator of the level of their activities.
Income from knowledge exchange activities	Total amount of income from licensing agreements, contracts with business and public sector organisations, income from copyrighted products and donations as % of total income	0% none 1-10% some 11-40% substantial >40% major	If a HEI gets relatively much of its income from 'knowledge exchange activities, it is assumed to be more involved in those activities.
Patent applications	The number of patents filed related to the total FTE of academic staff x 1000	< 10 major 5 - 10 substantial 1 - 5 some >1 none	The number of patents filed is a traditional indicator of innovativeness.
Start-up firms	The average number of start-up firms created over the last three years per 1000 FTE academic staff	< 10 major 5 - 10 substantial 1 - 5 some >1 none	Number of start-up firms established in a period is considered to be an indication of the innovative character of an institution. The more start-up firms the better the institution has succeeded in turning its knowledge production into knowledge used.

international orientation

Measure	Definition	Categories	Rationale
Foreign degree seeking students	Number of degree-seeking students with a foreign diploma on entrance as % of total enrolments in degree-seeking programs.	>7.5% major 2.5 – 7.5% substantial 0.5 – 2.5% some >0.5% none.	A high percentage of foreign degree-seeking students reflects a high attractiveness of the HEI to international students, assumed to be correlated with a high degree of international orientation.
Importance of international sources of income	Income from non-national sources, excluding tuition fees from nationals, as % of total income	> 10% major 5 - 10% substantial 1 - 5% some 0 none	If the relative size of international sources of income is large, this indicates a strong international orientation.
Incoming students in international exchange programs	The number of incoming students in international exchange programmes, as % of total enrolment	>2% major 1 - 2% substantial 0.5 - 1% some >0.5% none	The indicator reflects the international orientation of the institution. The assumption is that a strong international orientation will lead to a higher proportion of in-coming students .
International academic staff	Foreign academic staff members (headcount) as % of total number of academic staff members. Foreign academic staff = with a foreign nationality, employed by the institution or working on an exchange basis.	> 15% major 5 - 15% substantial 1 - 5% some 0 none.	A high percentage of international staff flags a strong international orientation.
Students sent out in international exchange programs	Number of students on international exchange programs as a % of total enrolment	>2% major 1 - 2% substantial 0.5 - 1% some >0.5% none	The indicator reflects the international orientation of the institution, assuming a strong international orientation leads to a higher proportion of students on exchange.

4 RESULTS DATA COLLECTION

Most often, the Web site for the ministry or department of education in the country in question contained the only up-to-date source of current information on the education system, particularly official policies in relation to university sector. The proviso is that statistics for net enrolment, literacy rates and participation rates in such official sources can be subject to bias. Many of the Pacific Islands states report figures that do not match other reports made by on-the-ground observers. In the case of some countries, again particularly Pacific island nations, little current information was available from government or institutional Web sites. Wikipedia and other free online encyclopaedias were not particularly useful, as with few exceptions, such sites contained out-dated or very inaccurate information.

For information on particular institutions, there was no alternative to a visit to the institution's own website. These are usually the only source of up-to-date information and reliable statistics. Sometimes language made these sites inaccessible.

International bodies such as the UNESCO and the Asian Development Bank have reports accessible online, and charitable or religious organisations were also often a useful source of current information. In many cases, such reports provided the only access to recent official facts and figures. Reports available on the sites of aid agencies, such as AUSAID and NZAID, were also used to flesh out the details available from other sources. For the Pacific islands, reports in PDF format to international aid agencies, such as UNICEF, were often the only source of recent information.

For information on the ICT environment, the abstracts of reports prepared by consultancy companies such as Budde were often helpful. These abstracts can be supplemented by blog notices and other new items on the Budde site (see http://www.budde.com.au and the sites of other IT consultancy companies). The International Telecommunications Union produces a range of statistical publications that present official and semi-official figures for ICT in countries across the world. If this project was to be repeated on a wider scale, it would almost certainly be worth purchasing a selection of these reports. Alternatively, there is a list of links to national telecommunications authorities offering statistical data at: http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/links. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank sites often have reports on topics such as ICT in education. These reports are, however, usually a few years out-of-date.

For the Pacific, both the AusAID and NZAid sites have a number of reports on different projects, as well as country profiles with varying degrees of

currency and accuracy. News sites for different Pacific Island nations can be useful for fleshing out official information on projects. However, most stories simply repeat official press releases or report speeches delivered by local notables. Such speeches often allude to ambitious plans which never eventuate.

Many SE Asian countries put up sites which offer snapshots of their education systems in order to attract overseas students. These can be very useful, if somewhat positively biased. Also, occasionally useful are pages produced by education agencies in the developed world, such as the British Council. These provide snapshots of the education market in various countries; for example,

http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-background.htm, and http://www.britishcouncil.org/eumd-information-background-indonesia.htm.

However, the quality of these reports varies greatly.

Finally, the project would have been much easier if greater use could have been made of authoritative paper reference works protected by copyright. The Europa World Year Book series and the International Encyclopedia of Education from Elsevier would have supplied quality background information on all of the countries studied; however, permission for online use of copyrighted material would need to be negotiated.

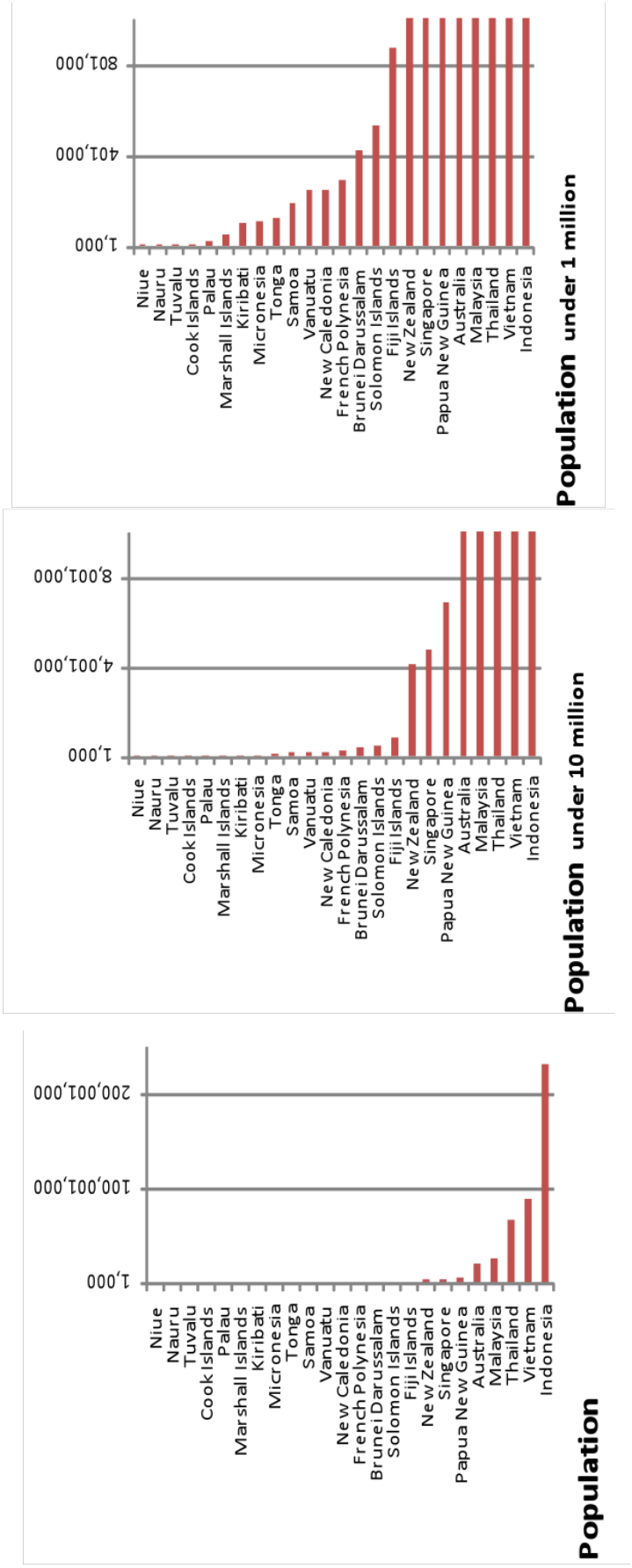
SAMPLE CHARACTERISITCS

This section provides a comparative overview of various characteristics of the countries captured in our sample.

Population statistics

Table 5: Population, urbanisation and rates of change in 24 countries in our study.

Country	Year	Population	Urbanisation rate (annual rate of change 2005-10)	Urbanisation (% of total population)	Annual population growth rate
Australia	2010	21,500,000	1.20%	89.0%	1.171%
Brunei Darussalam	2010	422,000	2.60%	75.0%	1.733%
Cook Islands	2010	11,488	-0.70%	74.0%	-3.256%
Fiji Islands	2010	875,983	1.60%	53.0%	0.827%
French Polynesia	2010	291,000	1.30%	52.0%	1.355%
Indonesia	2010	232,000,000	3.30%	52.0%	1.097%
Kiribati	2010	100,800	1.80%	44.0%	1.271%
Malaysia	2010	27,900,000	3.00%	70.0%	1.609%
Marshall Islands	2010	54,400	2.70%	71.0%	2.023%
Micronesia	2010	111,100	0.80%	22.0%	-0.284%
Nauru	2010	10,000	0.30%	100.0%	0.594%
New Caledonia	2010	252,352	2.10%	65.0%	1.561%
New Zealand	2008	4,173,460	1.00%	87.0%	1.300%
Niue	2009	2,000	-0.20%	39.0%	-0.032%
Palau	2010	20,500	1.80%	81.0%	0.374%
Papua New Guinea	2010	6,900,000	1.90%	12.0%	2.033%
Samoa	2010	192,001	1.70%	23.0%	1.322%
Singapore	2010	4,800,000	1.20%	100.0%	1.800%
Solomon Islands	2010	531,000	4.10%	18.0%	2.270%
Thailand	2010	68,100,000	1.70%	33.0%	0.653%
Tonga	2010	122,580	1.60%	25.0%	1.282%
Tuvalu	2010	10,472	1.30%	50.0%	0.659%
Vanuatu	2010	245,800	4.10%	25.0%	1.359%
Vietnam	2010	89,571,130	3.10%	28.0%	1.200%



Even a simple comparison of population is complicatd by the large disparaties across the study area.

Figure 3: Population in 24 countries studied

Amongst the countries in our study, population size (see Table 3 and Figure 3) varies from 2000 (Niue) to 232 million (Republic of Indonesia). Sixteen out of the 24 countries studies had a population size less than 1 million and 14 less than half a million. Overall, Pacific nations have lower populations than Asia, Australia or New Zealand, with Papua New Guinea being the only 'Pacific' nation with a population over 1 million.

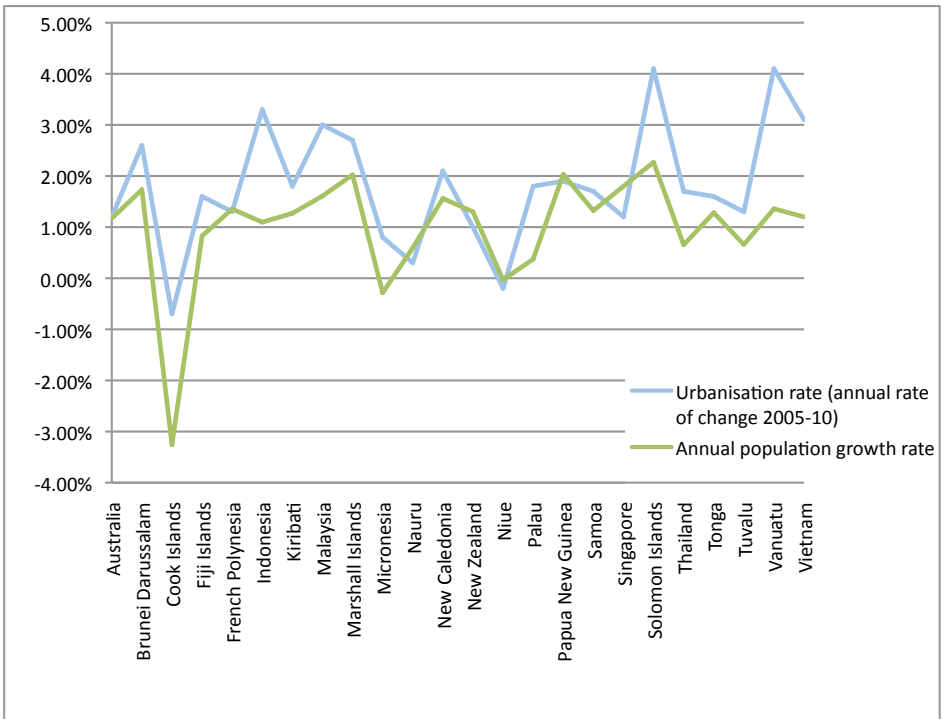


Figure 4: Rate of urbanisation compared with annual population growth in countries studied.

Population growth rates range from 0.374% to 2.27% and exhibit no clear cut regional patterns (see Table 3 and Figure 3). Three countries have a negative population growth (Cook Islands, Micronesia and Niue). As might be expected, as population size increases, generally there is a commensurate decline in the annual population growth rate and often an increase in the percentage of the population that is urbanised. Annual population growth rate and change in urbanisation rate have a strong positive correlation. There is no obvious relationship between annual population growth rates and urbanisation.

Literacy rates

Literacy rates range from 57% (PNG) to 99% (Tonga, Australia) and share a positive correlation with education expenditure as a percentage of total GDP (see Figure 4). Number of years of schooling are also reflected in literacy rates. The years of compulsory schooling range from none in the Solomon Islands to 12 in New Zealand and Brunei (see Table 4).

Expenditure on education is as little as 0.2%of GDP (Cook Islands) to as much as 17.8% of GDP (Kiribati), the average being 6% of total GDP. Education funding ranges from ~6% (Niue) to 28% (Tonga) of total government expenditure, but on average, about 16% of total government expenditure is allocated to education (see Table 4).

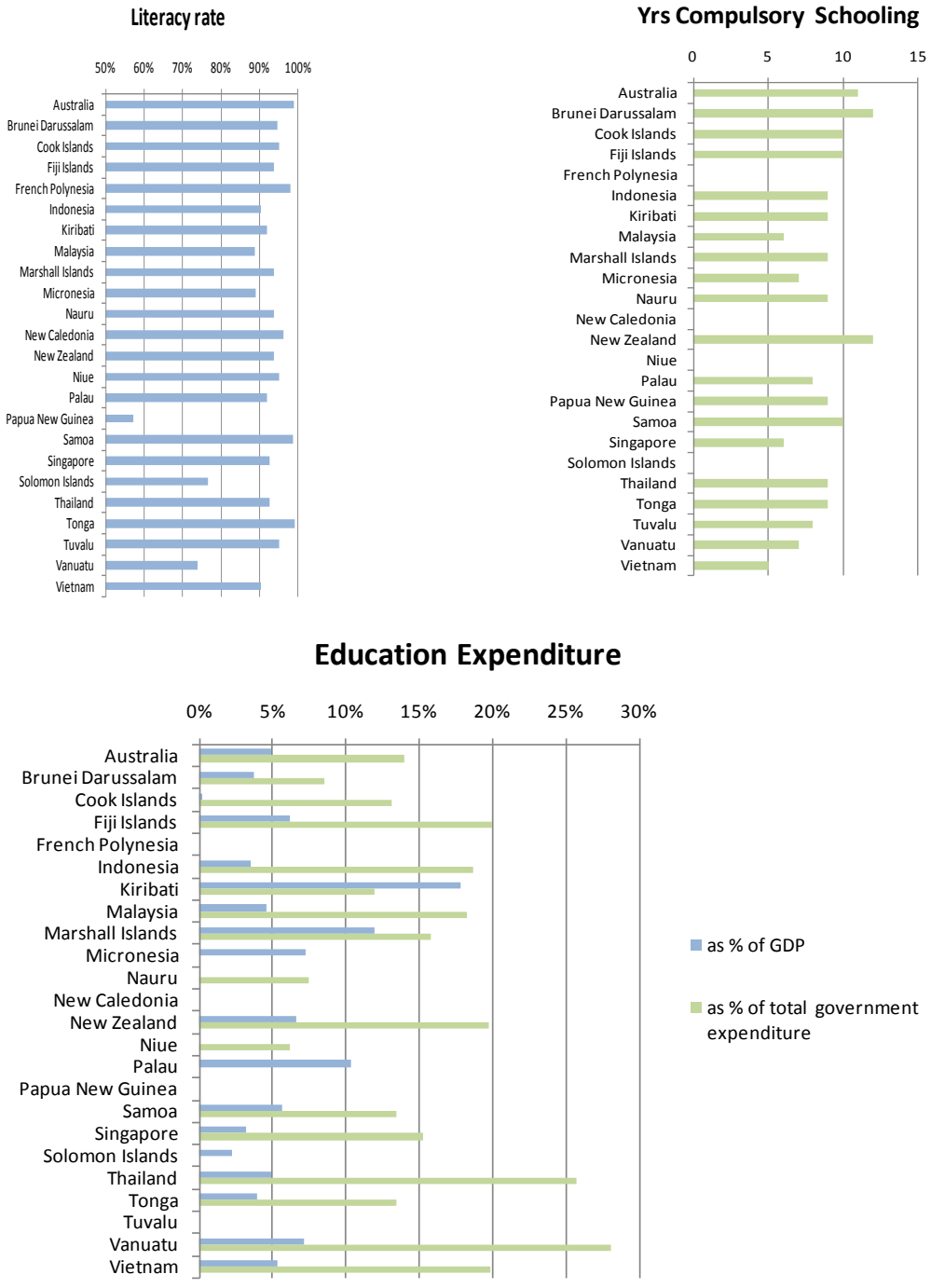


Figure 5: Comparison of literacy rates, number of years of compulsory schooling and expenditure on education in 24 countries in our study.

Table 4: Literacy rates, number of years of compulsory schooling and expenditure on education in 24 countries in our study.

Country	Literacy rate	Yrs Compulsory Schooling	Expenditure on education	
			as % of GDP	as % of total government expenditure
Australia	99%	11	4.90%	14.00%
Brunei Darussalam	94.7%	12	3.70%	8.50%
Cook Islands	95.0%	10	0.20%	13.10%
Fiji Islands	93.7%	10	6.20%	20.00%
French Polynesia	98%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Indonesia	90.4%	9	3.50%	18.70%
Kiribati	92.0%	9	17.80%	11.90%
Malaysia	88.7%	6	4.60%	18.20%
Marshall Islands	93.7%	9	12.00%	15.80%
Micronesia	89%	7	7.30%	n/a
Nauru	93.7%	9	n/a	7.50%
New Caledonia	96.2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
New Zealand	93.7%	12	6.60%	19.70%
Niue	95%	n/a	n/a	6.20%
Palau	92%	8	10.30%	n/a
Papua New Guinea	57.3%	9	n/a	n/a
Samoa	98.7%	10	5.70%	13.40%
Singapore	92.5%	6	3.20%	15.30%
Solomon Islands	76.6%	0	2.20%	n/a
Thailand	92.6%	9	4.90%	25.70%
Tonga	99.2%	9	3.90%	13.50%
Tuvalu	95%	8	n/a	n/a
Vanuatu	74%	7	7.20%	28.10%
Vietnam	90.3%	5	5.30%	19.80%

Information about the number of schools at each level is inconsistent (see Table 5) and usually becomes more difficult to locate as the population (and presumably the number of schools) increases. The number of universities ranges from 1 to 137 (Indonesia) and is to some extent tied to the population size, which is unsurprising given that supply of education is no doubt partly driven by demand/need). Determining the number of institutions is also confounded by terminology, particularly in the VET and tertiary sectors. For example, Table 5 calculates the number of universities as public and private institutions that have University in their corporate name. There are many other higher education providers, variously named institutes, colleges, polytechnics and so on, which are not included in this tally. This sort of discussion needs to be qualified by consideration of what constitutes each education level in the various countries. More accurate and complete records might be obtained by direct enquiry with relevant government departments in the various countries.

Table 5: Count of institutions at each educational level in 24 countries in our study.

Country	Year	Population	Pre-primary schools	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Non-govt schools"	VET institutions	Universities
Australia	2010	21,500,000	n/a	6357	1409	2725	n/a	43
Brunei Darussalam	2010	422,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	80	12	4
Cook Islands	2010	11,488	24	25	16	7	8	1
Fiji Islands	2010	875,983	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	55	3
French Polynesia	2010	291,000	31	198	52	23	5	1
Indonesia	2010	232,000,000	49000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	137
Kiribati	2010	100,800	200	91	42	15	8	1
Malaysia	2010	27,900,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	14
Marshall Islands	2010	54,400	76	101	21	36	3	1
Micronesia	2010	111,100	71	155	28	n/a	3	1
Nauru	2010	10,000	4	4	3	2	0	1
New Caledonia	2010	252,352	65	286	75	120	5	5
New Zealand	2008	4,173,460	4890	1109	245	n/a	26	11
Niue	2009	2,000	3	1	1	0	0	2
Palau	2010	20,500	n/a	21	6	7	3	1
Papua New Guinea	2010	6,900,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	500	26	6
Samoa	2010	192,001	111	141	24	38	22	3
Singapore	2010	4,800,000	200	174	170	n/a	n/a	4
Solomon Islands	2010	531,000	455	537	136	n/a	2	2
Thailand	2010	68,100,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	375	400+	119
Tonga	2010	122,580	n/a	n/a	9	n/a	14	4
Tuvalu	2010	10,472	19	11	1	1	3	2
Vanuatu	2010	245,800	644	488	81	n/a	12	3
Vietnam	2010	89,571,130	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	24	39

Distance education was found to be operating at all levels of education in the region: 50% of countries offer schooling by distance, 66% offer VET courses by distance, and only one country (Brunei) does not have distance education at a higher education level (see Table 6).

Table 6: Count of countries in our study offering distance education in schools and VET and higher education institutions.

	Yes	No
School	12	12
Vocational Education & Training (VET)	16	8
Higher Education (HE)	23	1

Legislation and policy

Some legislation and policy regulating education (and therefore distance education) was identified for all countries and is listed in Appendix F. National policy and regulations could be found for all countries (see Table 8). International agreements that impact on education were located for all countries except New Zealand and Singapore, and regional agreements relating to education were located for all countries except New Zealand and Australia. State/district level regulation could only be identified in the case of Micronesia, Vanuatu and Australia. Interestingly, although most countries offer distance education in some form, especially at higher levels of education, and distance education has a long history in this region of the world, having operated in many countries since the 1970s, documentation of legislation specifically mentioning distance education was uncovered in only one country, Papua New Guinea. However, legislation specific to distance education was reported by in-country experts to also exist in Malaysia, Vietnam and Vanuatu.

Table 7: Count of countries in our study with legislation or policy, formalised quality assurance, support for open educational resources, major distance education initiatives or publication opportunities devoted to distance education.

	Yes	No
Legislation/Policy identified	24	0
International	22	2
Regional	22	2
National	24	0
State/district	3	17
Quality Assurance Formalised	20	4
Major e-learning inititative identified	20	4
Benchmarking	5	19
OER support	18	6
No. of DE journals	5	19

National regulatory or policy influences

Without exception every country in this project has National Acts, Ordinances or Legislation relating to the governance of Education. Distance education was found to be operating at all levels of education in the region: 50% of countries offer schooling by distance, 66% offer VET courses by distance, and only one country (Brunei) does not have distance education at a higher education level. In general the project identified that all countries had a legislation and policy at a National level that impacted directly on a countries capability and capacity for distance education. State/district level regulation could only be identified in the case of Micronesia, Vanuatu and Australia.

A systemic approach to quality assurance and accreditation and formalised processes and delegated responsibilities could be identified in all countries except Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Palau. The Marshall Islands, Fiji, Samoa and Micronesia are the only countries for which report of a major e-learning initiative could not be found. Benchmarking examples, on the other hand, were very rare, only being Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, Brunei and Singapore. Open Educational Resources (OER) were supported in 75% of countries—no evidence of support for OER was recorded for the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Polynesia, Palau, Indonesia or Brunei. Only five countries produced an academic journal specific to distance education—Indonesia (1), Malaysia (3), New Zealand (4), Australia (8), Thailand (2)—this is primarily a product of the maturity and size of the university sector.

ICT infrastructure

Table 8: Some statistics about telephone usage and ICT infrastructure for 24 countries in our study.

Country	Year	Telephone lines	Year	Mobiles	Year	Mobile cellular subscriptions/100	Overall telephone system assessment	Year	Computers/100	Overall ICT Infra-structure assessment
Brunei Darussalam	2009	80,500	2009	425,000	2009	107.6	adequate	2005	8.92	Adequate
Malaysia	2008	4,292,000	2008	27,125,000	2009	109.7	adequate	2008	38.7	Adequate
Marshall Islands	2008	4,400	2008	1,000	n/a	n/a	adequate	n/a	n/a	Adequate
Tonga	2009	31,000	2009	53,000	2009	50.98	adequate	2007	7	Adequate
Vietnam	2008	25,591,000	2008	70,000,000	n/a	n/a	adequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Cook Islands	2009	6,900	2009	7,000	n/a	n/a	adequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Kiribati	2009	4,000	2009	1,000	2009	1.02	adequate	2005	2.5	Inadequate
Micronesia	2008	8,700	2008	34,000	n/a	n/a	adequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Nauru	2008	1,800	2002	1,500	n/a	n/a	adequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Samoa	2009	31,900	2009	151,000	2009	46	adequate	2002	0.7	Inadequate
Tuvalu	2008	1,500	2008	2,000	2009	20.14	adequate	2002	5.9	Inadequate
Australia	2009	9,020,000	2009	24,220,000	2009	113.75	Excellent	2009	78.14	Adequate
New Caledonia	2008	63,000	2008	196,500	2008	100+	Excellent	n/a	n/a	Adequate
New Zealand	2008	1,750,000	2008	4,620,000	2009	110.16	Excellent	2009	80.26	Adequate
Singapore	2008	1,857,000	2008	6,375,000	2009	145.24	Excellent	2009	83.16	Adequate
Fiji Islands	2009	136,800	2009	640,000	2009	75.36	Excellent	2009	21.08	Inadequate
Thailand	2008	7,024,000	2008	62,000,000	n/a	n/a	Excellent	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Indonesia	2008	130,378,000	2008	40,578,000	n/a	n/a	Inadequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Niue	2009	1,100	2004	600	n/a	n/a	Inadequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Papua New Guinea	2008	60,000	2008	600,000	n/a	n/a	Inadequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Solomon Islands	2008	8,000	2008	30,000	2009	5.73	Inadequate	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Palau	2008	7,500	2008	12,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Inadequate
Vanuatu	2008	10,400	2008	36,000	2009	52.73	n/a	2008	4.38	Inadequate
French Polynesia	2009	54,300	2009	208,300	2009	90	n/a	n/a	n/a	Partially adequate

Singapore has highest mobile subscription rate (~1.5 per person), closely followed by Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Brunei all with rates just over one mobile per person (see Table 8). Most countries have an adequate telephone system; indeed, Australia. New Zealand, Thailand, New Caledonia, Singapore and Fiji were reported as having an excellent telephone system. Conversely, the Solomon Islands, Niue, PNG and Indonesia were considered to have an inadequate telephone system.

Computer ownership rates could not be determined for most countries. Of those where figures were available, Singapore, New Zealand and Australia have relatively high rates; Malaysia and Fiji moderate rates; and Samoa, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Tonga and Brunei Darussalam have quite low rates. Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Singapore, Tonga and French Polynesia (partially) were the only countries considered to have an adequate overall ICT infrastructure.

Table 9: Some statistics on internet usage for 24 countries in our study.

Country	Broadband Internet subscribers				Year	Internet Hosts	Year	Internet users	Year	Internet users/100
	Year	fixed /100	Year	mobile /100						
Vietnam	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	129,318	2009	23,000,000	n/a	n/a
Australia	2009	24.42	2009	57.67	2010	13,361,000	2008	15,170,000	2009	74.25
Brunei Darussalam	2008	3.56	n/a	n/a	2010	50,997	2010	319,000	2010	80.76
Cook Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	2,521	2008	5,000	n/a	n/a
Fiji Islands	2009	2.47	2009	0.83	2010	17,088	2008	103,000	2009	13.45
French Polynesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	36,056	2008	90,000	n/a	n/a
Indonesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	1,269,000	2008	30,000,000	n/a	n/a
Kiribati	2009	0	2009	0	2010	31	2008	2,000	2009	8
Malaysia	2009	6.09	2009	26.75	2010	344,452	2008	16,903,000	2009	55.9
Marshall Islands	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	3	2008	2,200	n/a	n/a
Micronesia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	3,097	2008	16,000	n/a	n/a
Nauru	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	4,158	2002	300	2001	2.99
New Caledonia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	22,456	2008	85,000	n/a	n/a
New Zealand	2009	22.9	2009	64.24	2010	2,470,000	2008	3,047,000	2009	79.7
Niue	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	397,270	2009	1,100	n/a	65
Palau	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Papua New Guinea	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	4,285	2008	120,000	n/a	n/a
Samoa	2009	0.11	n/a	n/a	2010	17,044	2009	9,000	2009	5.03
Singapore	2009	24.71	n/a	n/a	2010	992,786	2008	3,370,000	2009	68.29
Solomon Islands	2009	0.38	n/a	n/a	2010	4,065	2008	10,000	2009	1.91
Thailand	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2010	1,335,000	2008	16,100,000	n/a	n/a
Tonga	2009	0.96	2009	0	2010	20,847	2009	8,400	2007	8.4
Tuvalu	2009	2.93	2009	0	2010	109,478	2008	4,200	2001	10.434
Vanuatu	2009	0.21	2009	0	2010	1,347	2008	17,000	2009	7.09

Again, broadband and internet usage information was not available for many countries (see Table 9). Overall, broadband usage appears to be very low, mobile broadband less common than fixed broadband. In those countries where broadband usage is higher, such as Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, mobile broadband (60%) is used more than fixed broadband (~20%). In Malaysia mobile broadband usage (27%) is also much greater than use of fixed broadband (6%).

Brunei (81/100), New Zealand (80/100), Australia (75/100), Singapore (68/100), Niue (65/100) and Malaysia (60/100) were the countries with the highest rate of internet adoption.

Case study participants

Overall, there were 10 responses to the invitation to participate in the case studies. Nine institutions returned an adequately completed case study. Two institutions invited to participate declined. No response was received from three institutions despite numerous contact attempts. One institution completed so few questions that their responses could not be included in the analysis.

The institutions that participated in the study were

Australia
University of New England,
University of Southern Queensland
Central Queensland University

Indonesia
Universitas Terbuka in Indonesia

Malaysia
Open University of Malaysia

Thailand
Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University

Vietnam
Ho Chi Min Open University
Hanoi Open University

New Zealand
Open Polytechnic NZ

Papua New Guinea
Open University of Papua New Guinea

Overview of case results

The number of students in the ten institutions that we studied ranged from 4,000 to 450,000. Although the majority perceived beginning students as only somewhat competent, institutions reported a range of competencies amongst beginning students. This reflects the common government agendas of up-skilling more of the population, widening participation and supporting lifelong learning that lead to more diverse learners than ever before, with a wider range of educational and ICT experience. Most institutions considered their students were ICT competent on graduation.

There was a high level of support for the use of technology amongst the executive and management. Student attitudes towards e-learning were judged to be mostly favourable to somewhat favourable; and over half the institutions reported that surveys indicated their students were satisfied with the e-learning aspects of their courses. At over half of the study institutions

- technology is widely available with some or full training and support;
- wireless access is also widely available, with support for many mobile devices;
- high-speed broadband access is provided to enable instructional uses that include collaborative learning, video-based communication and other multimedia-rich interactions across campus; and
- they reported moving towards anytime/anywhere access.

Most institutions in our study (75%) have developed an education website/portal, with half being limited to entering and accessing administrative and academic information and the other half providing extensive administrative, instructional and collaborative tools and resources. Nonetheless, more discursive, relational and collaborative approaches to learning (Armstrong et al., 2008; Dalsgaard, 2006; Franklin and van Harmelen, 2007; Pedro, 2003; Redecker, 2009; Selwyn, 2007: 91) still appear to be limited.

Institutions studied have begun to implement more explicit policies on how technologies are to be used to support their core activities, with 50% either currently having or being in the process of developing a social media policy, and a further 37% planning to develop one. Only one institution had a social media policy specific to mobile devices, although about 60% are in the process of developing, or intend to develop, such a policy. Only two institutions have implemented e-portfolios in some courses to demonstrate a student's range of skills and knowledge. Nearly all (90%) institutions offer some formative assessments using technology, but in most (75%), technology-based assessments are only occasionally used to measure student achievement in 21st century skills and knowledge.

Over the following two pages, Table 10 attempts to provide a multivariate characterisation of higher education institutions in our study based on the indicators developed during the UMAP project (van Vught, Kaiser, File et al., 2010). The resultant institutional profiles allow comparison in terms of their learning and teaching profile, student profile, research involvement, regional engagement, involvement in knowledge exchange and international orientation.

Most of the institutions in our study could provide sufficient information to calculate the traditional measures that contribute to their learning and teaching profile, student profile and research involvement. However, most were less able (or less willing) to quantify their regional engagement, involvement in knowledge exchange and international orientation.

Table 10: Summary profiles of nine distance education institutions that completed a case study.

	HCMCOU	HOU	OCUPNG	OPNZ	OUM	STOU	UNE	USQ	UT
Regional									
1st year bachelor from region	major 85%	none	major 15%	major 99%	not reported	major 99%	major 24%	major 15%	major 100%
Graduates working in region	major 10+%	none	major 90%	major 75%	not reported	major 99%	not reported	not reported	major 90%
Importance of local/regional income sources	major 90%	major 98%	major 100%	major 98%	not reported	major 99%	not reported	major 100%	major 100%
Involvement in knowledge exchange:									
Cultural activities	some 10	some 2	substantial 55	some 14	some 2	not reported	not reported	substantial 51	some 6
Income	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
Patent applications	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
Start-up firms	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
International orientation:									
Foreign degree seeking students	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
Importance of int'l income	none	none	none	none	not reported	none	none	none	none
Incoming students	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
International academic staff	not reported	not reported	substantial 11%	not reported	some 7	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported
Outgoing on exchange	not reported	some 0.98%	none	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported

Table 10 continued

	HCMCOU	HOU	OCUPNG	OPNZ	OUM	STOU	UNE	USQ	UT
Teaching and Learning Profile:									
Degree level focus	not reported	Bachelor & Sub-degree focus Bachelor: 68% Masters: 2% PhDs: 0 Other: 30%	Bachelor focus Bachelor: 90% Masters: 5.2% PhD: 4.1% Other: 0.2%	Bachelor focus Bachelor: 100%	not reported	Bachelor, Masters & PhD focus Bachelor: 55% Masters: 35% PhDs: 10%	Bachelor focus Bachelor: 55% Masters: 21% PhD: 2% Other: 22%	Bachelor & Masters focus Bachelor: 48% Masters: 33% PhD: 1% Other: 18%	strong Bachelor focus Bachelor Degrees: 99.9% Masters: 0.1%
Expenditure on teaching	not reported	major 50%	major 50%	major	not reported	not reported	major	major ~41.9%	major ~52.39%
Orientation of degrees	Mixed	not reported	Mixed	Other career-oriented focus 88%	not reported	Other career-oriented focus 69%	Other career-oriented focus 68.5%	not reported	General Formative 100%
Range of subjects	not reported	specialised 2 disciplines	not reported	comprehenisve 7 disciplines	comprehenisve 11 disciplines	comprehenisve 9 disciplines	broad 6 disciplines	broad	comprehenisve 7 disciplines
Student Profile:									
Distance learning students	predominant 30%	predominant 65%	predominant 65%	predominant	not reported	predominant 100%	predominant 64%	substantial	predominant 87%
Mature students	not reported	not reported	some 8%	predominant 54%	predominant 59%	predominant 49%	predominant 42%	predominant 34%	predominant 56%
Part-time students	not reported	not reported	none <1%	predominant 91%	predominant 100%	not reported	predominant 64%	predominant 72%	predominant 100%
Size of student body	not reported	very large	medium-sized	large	not reported	very large	medium-sized	large	very large
Research Involvement:									
Doctorate production	not reported	none	major	none	not reported	major	major	major	none
Expenditure on research	not reported	substantial 10%	substantial 10%	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	not reported	some 0.77%
Peer reviewed publications	not reported	Substantial	some 0.26	some 0.64	not reported	some 0.12	not reported	Substantial 1.34	some 0.96

5 SUMMARY COUNTRY PROFILES

AUSTRALIA

The Commonwealth of Australia is a large island continent, challenged by its vast remote regions, multi cultural composition of its population of more than 21 million people and comparatively affluent lifestyle. The country is a parliamentary democracy with the Queen of England as head of state ruling the six federated states and additional territories. The population is heavily urbanised and found primarily in the major cities of the east coast.

Australia has a large tertiary education sector with 41 universities distributed across the country serving both urban and rural communities. Most large cities are served by multiple universities, often with multiple campuses situated throughout the city and state. With a rich history in Distance Education (DE) to address remote populations and provide access to education, DE has evolved in Australia to become a world leading model and has been influential in much of the development of distance education in the surrounding Asian and Pacific regions. Notably, Australia is well positioned in the provision of communication technologies to support education including DE.

The key challenges and barriers that face distance education imminently in Australia are of a political reform and regulatory change nature. Recent reforms announced by the Australian Government include:

a rapid expansion of student numbers and to improved access for students from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds,

introduction of mission-based compacts (every Australian public university will negotiate annual compacts with the Commonwealth with agreed targets, achievement of which will trigger reward payments),

a deregulated, student-centred funding model (with impact on regional universities-some of the major DE providers in Australia), and

an emphasis on research (ERA rankings are expected to have a major impact on institutional prestige and the allocation of resources and funding).

In a regulatory sense, the establishment of a national Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA, responsible for quality assurance across the Australian higher education sector), the associated development of a standards framework for the sector including teaching and research will challenge (especially in the tertiary sector) the ability of providers of distance education to meet the increasing complexity of a teaching and learning environment. For example, it is possible that the Teaching and Learning Standards may ultimately be more aligned to internal enrolment practices than external enrolment (a.k.a Distance Education; DE).

In summary, whilst the reforms and political agenda would seem to support access to education and the provision of resources for education including distance education, it is unlikely that these will translate to being supportive for DE. Although a reform agenda of access for the low SES has been proclaimed, a corresponding emphasis on research through The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative sees funding diverted to the research activities of the sector rather than the Teaching and Learning activities. In an era of cost reduction including a corresponding reduction in the educational and instructional development staff to support distance education (in favour of research activities), access to adequate funding for future development and support of DE is likely to be usurped by research priorities and other institutional infrastructural needs. It is also likely that as DE providers engage in the era of a deregulated student-centred funding model, DE providers will be entangled in the tension between standards (as developed by the new regulatory agencies) and being able to attract enough students to offer well supported courses. The outcome is likely to result in an uneven distribution of costs and benefits across the sector and be a barrier for distance education in Australia.

BRUNEI

Brunei is an independent Sultanate on the northwest coast of the island of Borneo and has a population of just over 400,000. It has large reserves of oil and gas with the result that its people enjoy high subsidies and pay no taxes, having one of the highest per capita GDPs in Asia. However, due to its dwindling oil and gas reserves, Brunei is attempting to diversify its economy, marketing itself as a financial centre and a destination for upmarket and eco-tourism.

The country is ruled by its Royal Family; the Sultan being both Head of State and Head of the Government.

There are three public universities in Brunei: the Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), the Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB) and the Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA). The last is an Islamic University which was split off from the UBD. There is also a single private tertiary education provider, the Kolej IGS Brunei Darussalam, which offers a small number of courses in conjunction with the Malaysian LimKokWing University.

The UBD dates back to 1985 while the other three institutions are relatively new universities. UNISSA became an independent institution in 2007. ITB achieved university status in 2008. The Kolej offered its first degree programs only in 2010.

These differences are reflected in the much greater maturity of quality assurance mechanisms at the UBD. Although all the universities in Brunei Darussalam are committed to improving the quality of teaching and learning, only the USB has an established Strategic and Quality Assurance Management Unit (SQAMU). The Unit's quality assurance mechanisms have been in place for a number of years and are based on self-assessment down to the program level.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the entire education system.

The sole accreditation agency for higher education providers in Brunei is the Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC). The Council accredits private and public higher education providers and their courses. BDNAC's role is to (i) assess the value and status of any qualifications offered in Brunei, (ii) to ensure that evaluation processes and assessment criteria are consistent with national priorities; (iii) to establish appropriate accreditation guidelines; and (iv) to publish directories of accredited qualifications and institutions. BDNAC is also responsible for the development of the Brunei National Qualifications Framework (BNQF), a process which is at a relatively early stage.

Until very recently neither distance education nor e-learning were features of the Brunei education system. However, a number of initiatives have been taken in recent years to encourage the growth of e-learning. As an example, in 2009, UBD launched a new e-learning system called the Automated Lecture Capture and Publishing System (ALCAPS) that facilitated the recording of lecture sessions, making it easy for students to review them by logging onto the Ministry of Education (MoE) website.

Higher Education in Brunei is likely to be transformed over the next few years as a result of the introduction of mass tertiary education. The government is now committed to increasing student enrolment in higher education from 13.8% (2009) of the total student population to a target of 30% in 2014. As part of this process, the Brunei Darussalam government intends to create multiple pathways that will allow a greater number of young adults to progress from secondary to higher education. For many years, there has been substantial unmet demand for higher education due to insufficient places in public tertiary institutions and the lack of private providers. The Brunei government has already taken steps to increase the number of university places and private providers, and hopes to encourage the additional foreign higher education providers to enter the local market through local partnerships.

COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands, while a self-governing nation, has very strong links to New Zealand (with free association and citizenship rights and a common currency). Governmental oversight is maintained through a parliamentary select committee. Compulsory education is funded regardless of provider. Standards of secondary education tied to NZ's National Certificate of Educational Achievement and Vocational Education tied to NZ Qualifications Authority's framework and standards. Overall, educational facilities are below desired standards because of the lack of resources. There is also an issue with participation rates and retention and a shortage of secondary teachers. There is concern over the overall standard of educational achievement. Higher Education is delivered through the USP which has a campus on Rarotonga. The level of technology supporting the campus is improving all the time, but the declining population of the Cook Islands is also impacting on the HE student numbers.

Distance Education dates back to the 1970's in the Cook Islands. They were an original partner in the founding of USP and were early users of satellite technology to deliver programmes. They now have a full campus and have upgraded infrastructure through USPNet. The Cook Islands also have a strong relationship with New Zealand's Correspondence School and the Open Polytechnic and are making increasing use of Open Educational Resources. They are also funded in a significant manner through NZAid funding.

The Cook Islands Ministry of Education takes overall responsibility for policy. However, much of the Distance Education, both in the compulsory and the tertiary sector, is delivered by NZ organisations meeting NZ standards. The Government is moving to ensure all education providers are registered so issues related to governance and standards should be minor. Overall, the Secretary for Education is responsible for implementation and operations within the Cook Islands Education Sector as a whole.

Quality assurance at the Higher education level is overseen by AUQA and NZUAA. At the VET level, programmes are largely drawn from the NZ Qualification Framework and NZQA accreditation applies. There are a number of other international regulatory agencies and agreements in place as well. Perhaps the greatest change is being brought about by the increasing access and use of ICT's in education, and it is in this area where much future development will be taking place.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a collaborative distance university owned by the Governments of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. USP's main campus is in Fiji, but there are two other major campuses in Samoa and Vanuatu. There are also regional campuses or learning centres throughout the member countries.

USP is the main provider of university education in most member countries and supports students learning by face-to-face as well as various distance modes. The main campus of the USP in Suva has approximately 2,500 full time local students and 5,000 distance students throughout the Pacific. Printed based materials form the primary method of distance delivery. These are supplemented by a range of different media: audio/video tapes, CD-ROMs and DVDs, satellite-based videoconferencing and audioconferencing, and e-learning using the Moodle platform. The USP operates its own satellite (USPNet) to support provision of the Internet to Pacific nations.

USP is an internationally recognised and accredited provider and has its own formal Quality Assurance Framework. USP is also a member of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the Australasian Council for Open and Distance Education (ACODE). It also benefits from its ties with international quality assurance agencies, including the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) and the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (NZUAAU).

THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) are four self-governing states spread over more than 600 islands and 3 million square kilometres. It has a population of approximately 110,000 people. Each of the four participating states has it own constitution and parliament. Entering into a Compact of Free Association with the United States of America (U.S.) in 1986, the nation has benefitted from the provision of military defence, substantial aid and privileges of entry for its citizens to live and work into the U.S. In return, the U.S is permitted to operate military bases in the region.

The government of FSM is structured along U.S. lines with a Legislative, Executive and Judicial branch. The FSM oversees all aspects of government except for security and defence, which are provided by the U.S. The FSM National Department of Education (NDOE) sets standards, while the State Departments of Education (SDOEs) are responsible for curriculum and instruction.

The College of the Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM) is the major tertiary education provider in the country. COM-FSM has a national campus located on Pohnpei and State Campuses in each of the FSM states. The COM-FSM offers associate degree and certificate-level programs in a range of subjects, as well as short training programs. The College of Micronesia-FSM is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The College of Micronesia-FSM is currently on warning from the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC has requested that the College take a number of steps to improve the College's institutional effectiveness and governance. These mandated steps include the requirement that the College prepare plans in the areas such as the communication, finance, technology, budget-planning and facilities management.

While there is no FSM funded distance education, a number of external universities (such as the University of Hawai'i and the University of Guam) have provided distance education courses in the FSM, often in conjunction with the COM-FSM. Many of these initiatives have been on a pilot basis, but there are a number of more substantial programs.

FSM has, in places, very good Internet connectivity for the Pacific through undersea cable links but many islands lack almost all infrastructure, including electricity. The FSM are one of the Pacific nations that are served by PEACESAT. Based in Hawaii, PEACESAT has been existence since 1971. PEACESAT provides satellite-based video-conferencing to US-affiliated states in the region for distance education among other uses. The PEACESAT network has limited bandwidth capacity and will eventually be rendered obsolete by the spread of cable and fibre-optic connections in FSM and other US-affiliated states in the Pacific.

Further growth and change in the regulation, management and provision of distance education is very much in the hands of the external groups that in a de facto manner define adult education for FSM through the provision of aid funding and accreditation. These are amenable to change and the development of distance education but all funding would need to be provided externally as the FSM government is in no position to expand investment in education.

FIJI

Fiji is one of the most populous Pacific nations covering over 300 islands and with a population of just under 900,000 people and an economy dominated by tourism. Fiji is relatively urbanised with just over half of the population living in cities, including the capital Suva on Viti Levu with a population of just under 200,000. The legal and governance system is heavily based on the British system as Fiji was a colony of the UK until 1970. Recently, Fiji has been subjected to significant political disruption with a cycle of coups where political groups have used their influence with the Ethnic-Fijian dominated military to block legislation, abrogate the constitution, form caretaker governments and appoint Prime Ministers and Presidents of their own choosing. Indo-Fijians have left Fiji in large numbers due to personal safety and economic disadvantage concerns on such a scale that Ethnic Fijians now are the majority racial group. This has led to a near collapse of the region's economy, lower school attendance rates and disruption to education generally, and consequently, lower adult literacy rates.

Education in Fiji is centrally administered by the Ministry of Education. Through this arm of government, administration, policy and delivery of educational services is managed and provided. Curriculum frameworks and policy guidelines and directions are centrally developed. Other countries, such as Australia, have made a substantial contribution to the direct and indirect funding of tertiary and further technical education in Fiji. This has been in the form of direct funding, regular visiting by specialists for the purpose of training others and research, provision of scholarships for Fijian students and joint ventures.

The main campus of the USP is sited in Suva. In addition to the USP, there are approximately 50 tertiary education institutions operating in Fiji including a number operated by Australian universities, as well as two much smaller Fijian universities.

Policy and regulation of all forms of tertiary education, including distance, is the responsibility of the Fijian Ministry of Education. A Higher Education Advisory Board chaired by the Vice Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific was established by the Minister of Education in 2008 and advises the Ministry on policy and legislation. The Higher Education Promulgation 2008 and associated regulations (Higher Education Regulations 2009 and the Higher Education (Qualifications) Regulations 2009) govern all provision within Fiji.

The regulation of higher education in Fiji is the specific responsibility of the Higher Education Commission. The Commission began the task of accrediting award-conferring, post-secondary education providers in 2010. In that year, higher education institutions in Fiji were given temporary permission to operate pending formal accreditation. From 31 October 2011, all award-conferring institutions will require formal accreditation by the Commission to continue their operations. After accreditation, providers will be reviewed every five years to ensure continued compliance with the terms of accreditation. Currently the political instability in Fiji means it is unclear whether the accreditation process with facilitate or constrain future developments in higher education including distance delivery.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

French Polynesia is a collection of 118 islands and atolls, in the central Pacific, about 6,000 kilometres east of northern Australia. With a population of almost 300,000, French Polynesia controls an economic zone of over 5 million square kilometres. France officially governs French Polynesia and the Head of State is the French President. French justice and laws, defence, policing, tertiary education, monetary policy and foreign affairs are applied under the direct authority and management of France. It can be argued that French Polynesia has benefited from its association with the French education system and adult literacy rates at 98% for both males and females are among the highest in the Pacific region.

The major issue facing the education system in French Polynesia is the failure of local schools to meet the educational needs of Polynesian children. School participation rates for Polynesian students are well below those of other ethnic communities. Even before the end of compulsory schooling, large numbers of Polynesian students have dropped out. Many Polynesian students enter their first year of secondary school underprepared and fall further behind with every year. As a result, Polynesian participation rates in higher education are extremely low. The language policy appears to be one important factor in this attrition rate. French is the language of classroom instruction in almost all cases. This situation puts Polynesian students at a disadvantage. Recent pilot programs have shown the benefits of education in Polynesian students' first languages. It can be argued that the expanded use of Polynesian languages in primary and secondary schools may go some way towards redressing the gap in educational outcomes.

The main tertiary education provider in French Polynesia is the Université de la Polynésie Française (UPF) on Tahiti. The UPF offers diploma, bachelor, masters and doctoral level programs, as well as offering distance education through the open source system, DOKEOS. The UPF shares its École Doctorale with the Université de la Nouvelle-Calédonie (UNC). In addition, the École has partnership arrangements with other universities in overseas French territories. This situation means that the École is something of an exception to the general run of education providers in French Polynesia having an international reach. Interestingly, the École Doctorale currently

makes use of the latest DE technologies, including the videoconferencing, digital journals and the UPF's own Esp@don digital campus platform. The UPF is likely to continue to grow in terms of student numbers and to increase the scope of its research activities in areas such as biodiversity and natural resources management. It is also likely that the institution will continue to experiment with distance education technologies. When the Honotua fibre optic cable comes on line, it is expected that the UPF will expand its online provision of DE accordingly

In summary, the diversity of cultures and languages are challenges to the provision of education in French Polynesia. However, the outlook for distance education is more optimistic than in other pacific nations. The UPF appears to be continuing to experiment with distance education, clearly perceiving it as a mode of legitimate teaching to address the challenges and barriers to education in French Polynesia. UPF is continuing to invest in the use of advanced information technologies to deliver courses and qualifications. The association with the French education system maintains standards and quality assurances that benefit the reputation of the qualifications that are offered.

INDONESIA

The Republic of Indonesia consists of approximately 17,000 islands. With a land surface area of nearly 2,000,000 square kilometres and a population of almost 250,000,000, Indonesia is a major nation in the Asia-pacific region.

Three types of higher education are available in Indonesia: Universities, Institutes of Higher Education, and Colleges and Academies.

There are 137 universities. University education is provided by both government and privately run organizations with both sectors being overseen by the Ministry of Education.

The history of distance education begins with the establishment of correspondence-based teacher training courses in the 1950s. This was followed by the introduction of educational radio programs for ex-service personnel whose education had been disrupted by the War of Independence. The pace of change accelerated in the 1980s, when a crash teacher-training program stimulated demand for distance learning courses. One immediate result was the foundation of the national open university—Universitas Terbuka (UT)—in 1984. During the last two decades, increasing demands for qualified teachers have continued to stimulate the delivery of distance education programs.

The Ministry of National Education sponsors a number of SEAMEO (South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation) Centres that provide professional development programs for teachers in specialised fields.

The UT provides distance education-based training programs to government agencies, state-owned enterprises and public companies. These clients can request tailored programs designed to meet their needs. UT is currently engaged in the provision of training programs

for an extended range of public and private agencies. These include the Indonesia Army (TNI), Garuda, Islamic boarding schools and the Ministry of Agriculture.

UT, the major DE provider in the HE sector, offers nearly 1,000 courses. It has four faculties, three of which provide for high school graduates while one mainly offers in-service training for school teachers. UT had 646,467 students in 2010, 83% of which were teachers taking in-service courses.

Most UT students are expected to study independently and teaching is primarily through correspondence. Printed learning materials are supplemented by radio and TV broadcasts, CD-ROMs and Web-based materials using the Moodle platform. As a national institution, UT collaborates with both public universities and a number of private universities across Indonesia.

The UT is not the only distance education provider in the higher education sector. There are currently Distance Learning Centres (DLCs) at four other Indonesian universities.

The School of Internet (SOI) Asia works in concert with a number of Indonesian universities in the provision of online distance education. The SOI Asia is an international project utilising satellite-based Internet to distribute live lectures sourced from a number of Japanese higher education institutions. Indonesian universities participating in the SOI Asia project include Brawijaya University Sam Ratulangi University, Hasanuddin University, Institute of Technology Bandung and University of Syiah Kuala. In addition to live lectures, SOI Asia broadcasts the proceedings of workshops, conferences, talks and symposia, as well as providing online access to past lectures and course materials in the fields of ICT, science and environmental studies.

A number of Indonesian universities have established OCW repositories as part of OpenCourseWare Consortium.

The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has overall responsibility for both public and private institutions within the higher education sector. The Ministry grants approval for the establishment of new higher education institutions. Institutions must also receive MONE approval for new study programs. In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs exercises oversight over Islamic institutes, which have the same rank as universities.

Formal accreditation is the task of the Indonesian National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (NAA-HE). The NAA-HE is an independent body responsible to the Minister for National Education. At present, the NAA-HE is engaged in completing the accreditation of higher education institutions and programs under the new standards released in 2009. It is estimated that at least 30% of Indonesia's 15,000 undergraduate programs are currently unaccredited under the new standard.

Government policies from 1999 onwards have favoured the corporatisation of public universities. Universities have been offered greatly increased

autonomy, but at the cost of accepting outcomes-based funding. Universities that take on the status of a Badan Hukum Pendidikan (BHMN) win new revenue-generating opportunities. With this benefit comes new reporting obligations in terms of accountability, quality assurance and transparent evaluation. These changes are part of the Indonesian Government's strategy to encouraging innovation, efficiency and excellence in the higher education sector.

The higher education sector in Indonesia faces an uncertain future. Since 1997, public funding for universities has decreased significantly. Equally unsettling are the challenges institutions face in terms of continuing corruption and the prospect of increased competition from overseas providers. Financial pressures have increased the difficulties institutions face in stamping out corruption, a factor that threatens to undermine institutional reputations in the local plans to Indonesian Government's commitment to widen opportunities foreign higher education providers within Indonesia.

KIRIBATI

Kiribati has one of the largest exclusive economic zones (3.55 million square km) but a population of only 100,000 people primarily located on the island of Tarawa. Formerly part of the Gilbert Islands, Kiribati is geographically isolated and depends on aid, fishing and reparations from nations involved in phosphate mining for its economy. Kiribati is threatened by rising ocean levels that are expected to render uninhabitable the majority of the inhabited islands with the next century. Most of these (32 of 33) are no higher than 2m above sea level currently.

Geographical constraints mean that approximately 30% of the primary school age children do not attend school and only 20% of those who do are able to attend secondary school. A variety of trades-oriented tertiary providers exist with an emphasis on providing skills for employment in the foreign operated fishing fleets. The USP operates a campus on Tarawa providing a large selection of distance courses delivered primarily with physical media but supported through the USPNet satellite network with video lectures and other communication facilities for students.

All education in the Republic of Kiribati is funded jointly by government, church and parents. The Ministry of Education oversees all programs centrally and is a significant arm of government, accounting for around 25% of all government expenditure. The regulatory framework for education in Kiribati is fragile. The legal framework for the provision of education in Kiribati is the Education Ordinance (1977). This legislation dates back to the colonial period and many aspects of the legislation have fallen into disuse and it clearly cannot cover the range of modern issues affecting distance provision.

Telecommunications in Kiribati are provided by Kiribati Services Kiribati Ltd (TSKL), a fully government-owned company. TSKL provides a GSM

mobile telephone network as well as traditional fixed line services. TSKL also offers Internet access to homes and businesses, as well as running two Internet cafes. TSKL is currently a monopoly provider and Digicel was refused a license to operate a mobile service in Kiribati in 2009 calling into question whether external parties could readily provide distance education effectively using technology.

Further growth and change in the provision of distance education is very much in the hands of the external groups that in a de facto manner define adult education for Kiribati through the provision of aid funding and the operation of the USP. There is no evidence that the Government of Kiribati is currently in any position to define processes or regulate development of distance education outside of the services defined and provided by those groups.

MALAYSIA

Malaysia has a population of about 28 million. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nation. Malays are the most numerous group, but the minority Chinese hold a disproportionate share of the nation's wealth. Significant racial and religious tension continues to exist, fuelled by economic and religious differences, particularly between Muslim and Non-Muslim (Buddhist, Taoist, Christian, and Hindu) peoples.

Having achieved full independence in 1957, Malaysia underwent substantial political turmoil in its early years, but has enjoyed a more stable period of government in recent decades. It enjoys a modern and diverse economy and is regarded as one of the stronger economies in the region.

Recent developments in all sectors of education include initiatives to move away from rote learning practices to ones that include more critical thinking and greater understanding of concepts. There is a significant divide between National schools and Chinese schools although there have been steady moves to unify the system. However, the tertiary entrance system is heavily biased towards Malay students achieving university places over Chinese students. As a result, many Malaysian students study overseas if there is financial support to do so.

There are 14 universities in Malaysia, including two private universities and four overseas universities with local campuses.

Distance education in Malaysia began with the activities of private correspondence schools. The Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) became the first Malaysian provider of higher education by distance in 1971. However, growth in the sector was relatively slow until the 1990s. The situation changed when education for adults was made a major priority as part of the Malaysian Government's Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996–2000). The result was a rapid expansion of the provision of distance education by Malaysian universities. Almost all major universities in Malaysia now offer distance learning programs.

A varied range of technologies is employed in distance learning in Malaysian higher education. Although many universities continue to rely heavily on correspondence courses, there is increasing use of Internet technologies, including, email, online chat, bulletin-boards and videoconferencing. However, most distance education providers in Malaysia have lagged behind world-class institutions overseas in the adoption of the latest Web-based e-learning approaches. Extensive use is still made of fixed videoconferencing facilities at local learning centres to deliver videoconferencing. As broadband becomes more widely available, a switch to the wider use of Web-based multimedia and Web 2.0 approaches is expected.

The Open University Malaysia provides an example of the successful use of distance learning in the university sector. Although a private university, Open University Malaysia (OUM) is owned by a consortium of 11 Malaysian public universities. Distance learning is typically through a combination of online delivery and face-to-face tuition at Learning Centres, although a growing number of students study entirely online. The OUM has over 79,000 students in 70 academic programs. The Government sponsored the Off-Campus Programme at the Mara Institute of Technology (ITM), which was established in 1973 to produce more professionals and semi-professionals amongst the Bumiputra (indigenous group). The Off-Campus academic programme at USM is the largest provider of distance education at the tertiary level, leading to degree qualifications.

In addition to Malaysian providers, there are a number of foreign universities active in the provision of distance learning. These include well-known UK universities such as the University of London, which offers over a 100 bachelors and masters level programs through distance education in Malaysia. There is also a significant Australian presence in the distance education marketplace.

Tertiary Education on Malaysia is overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education. Although education is the responsibility of the federal government, each state has an Education Department to coordinate educational matters in its territory.

Accreditation of academic programs provided by private colleges and universities is overseen by the National Accreditation Board. The management and coordination of quality assurance in public universities is carried out by the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) under the oversight of the Ministry of Higher Education.

Although long self-accrediting, Malaysian public universities are now subject to independent audit through the Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA). The MQA administered the first national review of university teaching in 2008–2010. The Rating System for Higher Education Institutions in Malaysia involved 58 universities and university colleges. Each institution was independently assessed in terms of their performance in terms of undergraduate teaching and learning.

NAURU

The Republic of Nauru is one of the world's smallest nations with a land surface area of approximately 21 square kilometres and a population of approximately 10,000 people. It is remote, being situated 42 kilometres south of the Equator, 300 kilometres East of Kiribati and nearly 6,000 Kilometres Northeast of Australia. Nauru is a member country of the British Commonwealth. This small island state education system is challenged by its small size, remoteness, political and economic history, especially post the exhaustion of the phosphate resources of the island.

The education system in Nauru experienced near-collapse during 2000–2005. During these years, schools on the island barely functioned. The aftermath of the crisis was a sharp decline in the number of schools at all levels, closure of schools and the departure of most skilled teachers.

Distance education on Nauru is provided by the USP. Policy and reform for distance education in Nauru relies on USP policy and reforms. The USP Centre in Nauru (now the Nauru Campus) was opened in 1987 and is the only distance education provider on the island. It provides audio and video-conferencing facilities, library and computer laboratory, as well as Internet and email access to Nauru students studying through distance education. Despite the range of courses available, distance enrolments at the Nauru are extremely low. In 2008, the EFTS student load at the Nauru Campus was only 20 students, in part due to the pipeline effects of the chaotic conditions of 2000–2005.

Telecommunications on Nauru have been extremely poor. Recently however, mobile phone services and basic Internet connectivity together with island-wide radio and TV coverage has become available. One successful and recent innovation is Radio Pasifik-Nauru, a community-based educational radio station designed to assist students on Nauru to overcome isolation, frequent power cuts and the scarcity of transportation and fuel. USP lectures and tutorials comprise about half the station's programming. Radio Pasifik-Nauru demonstrates that innovative approaches can succeed in delivering distance education even under conditions of extreme isolation.

In summary, this small republic faces immense economic and budgetary challenges to providing educational services to its small and remote population. Nauru is gradually rebuilding it educational systems following almost total collapse during 2000-2005. It could be argued that this rebuilding will take 5-10 years before some stability returns and students exit the secondary system of education seeking higher education.
Nauru will have to seek innovative and cost effective solutions (distance education) if it is to provide access to education for its population. Other infrastructural challenges to the provision of education include the unstable power supply, fuel, employment and scarcity of transportation. Despite these challenges, innovative solutions to provision of distance education are gaining momentum as evidenced by the community radio

station and the Nauru Government support for projects such as the COL's Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC). It can be argued that Nauru's challenges in education can only be met by distance education.

NEW CALEDONIA

New Caledonia is governed directly by France and is situated approximately 2,000 kilometres north-east from Sydney, Australia. It has a land surface area of approximately 19,000 square kilometres and a population of approximately 250,000 people. New Caledonia holds approximately one quarter of the world's nickel reserves and is the region's major income-earning industry. The official language is French, which is also the language of education, business and trade as well as 33 other Melanesian-Polynesian languages and dialects. The diversity of cultures and languages are common challenges faced by many pacific nations.

Recent history tells a story of a nation seeking self-determination. The Noumea Accord of 1998 was an agreement to set out how and when the territory will achieve this through a cooperative and peaceful means. Between 2014 and 2019, a referendum is to be held to decide if this will occur.

Given that New Caledonia has been a part of France, both directly and indirectly, for two centuries, its education system has evolved to follow the same model. The education in New Caledonia is essentially the same as that in metropolitan France. One challenge faced by the education system is the substantial gap in terms of educational outcomes between Kanak children and others. Explanations range from accusations of institutional racism to claims of a specific 'Melanesian mentality' that hinders the academic success of Kanak and Pacific Islander children.

The *Université de Nouvelle-Calédonie* (UNC) is the major tertiary education provider in New Caledonia. The UNC is currently a small teaching university with aspirations to become a larger institution with an expanded research role, serving the French overseas territories in the South Pacific. In 2012, the three different parts of the UNC will move to a single campus=. with improved facilities. UNC intends to position itself as an international university, creating new courses designed to attract overseas students.

New Caledonia has relatively modern telecommunications by Pacific standards with Government owned fixed line telephony, a GSM mobile network and Internet access. The rapid expansion of telecommunications access is due to the Gondwana-1 undersea communications cable connecting New Caledonia and Australia enabling widespread Internet access. Free Internet wi-fi services are installed in a number of public areas, including high schools and institutes of higher learning.

New Caledonia is largely a consumer of distance education courses from metropolitan France, rather than a source of home-grown programs. However, there are signs of a growing interest in the area of distance education. This interest is typified by the Académie en ligne (Academy

Online) initiative, a free online educational resource site produced by the CNED and now available to students in New Caledonia.

In summary, New Caledonia has a well-developed information communications network in comparison to others nations in the pacific region. In the near future the movement by New Caledonia towards independence, existing good information communications networks, an economy founded on a natural resource together with a historically well founded and robust educational system provide solid foundations for the future development of distance education. One outcome of this may be a home-grown distance education to improve access to education and address local cultural and language challenges.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand is a formally British colony with a culture strongly influenced by Pacific peoples including the indigenous Maori population. New Zealand has a population of over 4.1 million people and a well-developed education system containing eight universities and well over 1000 other tertiary providers. Distance education is provided by a large number of institutions but particularly by the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand and Massey University. A feature of the New Zealand system is the three Wananga, indigenous tertiary providers which can offer degrees and which do offer distance education programmes throughout New Zealand. Students from any culture can study in Wananga but the methods used are based heavily on the Maori culture and epistemology.

New Zealand is a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy as a system of government. New Zealand‘s education governance, steering and planning structure is relatively complex. The key legislation is the Education Act (1989) and its extensive amendments. The main agencies are the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) and Career Services Rapuara. TEC, NZQA and Career Services are Crown Agencies with their boards appointed by the Minister. TEC is a combined policy implementation agency, involved in institutional capacity building, overall policy advice, and allocation of government funding. It also negotiates charters and profiles with the institutions. NZQA provides overarching quality assurance, administers the national qualifications framework (Register of Quality Assured Qualifications), registers private providers and evaluates overseas qualifications.

New Zealand universities are largely self-accrediting under the auspices of a collective group ‘Universities New Zealand.’ Programme approval for universities is handled by the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and universities are audited by the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit (UZUAAU) operated by Universities New Zealand. The term “university” is legally protected in New Zealand and may only be used with the permission of the Minister of Education when marketing or providing services (including distance education) within New Zealand.

Government priorities for tertiary education are conveyed in the Tertiary Education Strategy and have a strong emphasis on economic outcomes including the gaining of degree qualifications by school-leaver populations. Funding plans negotiated by all institutions with the TEC set priorities for student intakes and performance measures that currently discourage the use of distance education approaches. The legislative and regulatory environment are currently a significant constraint on provision and the stated position of the Government is to not fund an expansion of the current levels of provision but rather encourage the migration of skilled workers.

NIUE

The Niuean Education system is almost completely dependent on the NZ Education system. At the compulsory level, Niuean schools teach the NZ curriculum and sit NZ examinations although there are concerns over the standard of teacher qualifications. This also applies to the limited VET offerings on Niue which reflect NZQA standards. This reduces the need for complex regulatory and legal structures. The country has a developing infrastructure with a freely available, ubiquitous wi-fi network and every school child with a laptop through the OLPC (One Laptop per Child) initiative. Nonetheless relatively low bandwidth does hinder connectivity.

The widespread access, however, does mean that there is significant penetration by off shore providers, especially in the VET system that provides opportunities. There is a small administrative USP campus on Niue, but the number of EFTS is very small but out-migration has meant that there are very low enrolments in courses offered on Niue.

Overall, NZ educational standards prevail, but increasingly migration is seen as the best option to enhance educational experiences either to NZ or to a regional training centre. The reliance on the NZ Qualification Framework and syllabi is almost total for the state educational system and is under the direction of a Director of Education. There is little information available about private education providers.

Falling rolls due to out-migration and the incursions by distance education providers mean that the current provision of tertiary education is likely to further erode. However, the ubiquitous wi-fi availability means that all citizens will soon (if not already) have access to Distance Education.

PALAU

The Republic of Palau is a Pacific island nation near the Philipines that entered into Compact of Free Association with the US in 1986. The Compact has resulted in the provision of military defence, substantial aid and privileges of entry for its citizens to live and work into the US and a number of other key services. In return, the US is permitted to operate military bases in the region.

The need for external providers of distance education to apply for a licence (Foreign Investment Approval Certificate) is a safeguard against 'fly-by-night' opportunist organisations. In addition, the remoteness of the country and the limited technology infrastructure, as well as the dependence on US Federal aid would indicate that any development will be slow and likely to be within a national framework.

At present, tertiary education provision is dominated by the Palau Community College. This is likely to continue as the PCC is accredited to the US-based Western Association of Schools and Colleges, one of the major US accreditation agencies, which suggests a level of quality, although Palau has no government quality agency to ensure this. Nonetheless, the PCC has a 15 year plan that includes goals around expanding research and development in areas such as agriculture, pest management, aquaculture, the establishment of an Institutional Research Office, and the creation of an IT Classroom. In addition, the PCC is establishing the Palau Tourism and Hospitality School of Excellence.

However, Palau is a signatory to a number of regional agreements which are supportive of the quality of tertiary education and in reality, because of the small population and remoteness, this is likely to be strongly distance-focussed. This includes agreements such as:

- Pacific Islands Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP)
- Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education PRIDE)
- Pacific Education Development Framework (2009–2015)
- The Pacific Plan.

In addition, there are (or have been) national initiatives, such as the Education for All National Plan Republic of Palau (2002– 010) and the Education Master Plan (2006–2016).

Because Palau depends almost wholly on Palau Community College for tertiary-level education and this is a Government Institution, the governance practices are sufficient. With respect to ICT use, Palau has a very low level of usage and is looking at a very modest development pathway, and again, the policies and practices are appropriate for the context.

Distance Education and its use of ICT has benefited from two major initiatives; PRELSTAR and PR*TEC, both of which are Ministry of Education projects undertaken in association with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. These projects have provided basic technical capability in computer technology and provide a foundation for growth in the area of eLearning.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Papua New Guinea (PNG) comprises approximately half the large island of New Guinea and around 600 other islands and is directly north of the continent of Australia. With a population of approximately seven million Papua New Guinea is claimed to be one of the most culturally diverse countries on Earth, with over 870 indigenous languages and at least as many traditional societies. Approximately 83% of the population live rurally in some form of subsistence farming activity, making it one of the least urbanised countries in the world. One third of the population live in severe poverty. Many parts of the country are very remote, particularly the central highlands, and are almost inaccessible. Although Papua New Guinea gained its independence from Australia peacefully in 1975 it has experienced political instability since with regular allegations of corruption of its politicians and officials.

Education in PNG, particularly secondary education, is a privilege that many do not enjoy. Only three quarters of eligible students are enrolled in primary education and only one quarter of eligible students are enrolled in secondary education. PNG faces substantial challenges in the adequate provision of primary and secondary education for its population.

PNG Higher Education institutions face common challenges to those experienced by the primary and secondary education sector including: constraints to public funding; poor physical facilities; inadequate information technology, libraries, equipment and teaching resources; outdated curriculum; poor student services and amenities; problems with recruitment and retention of teaching staff; problems with preparation of students for entry to university; safety issues and other barriers for female students; administrative and management weaknesses; and limited research capacity. Added to these is the complexity of a culturally and linguistically diverse population. It would seem that an expansion in higher education in the near future will continue to be constrained while the country is addressing poor participation rates and infrastructure in primary and secondary schooling.

Although there are opportunities for using ICT in distance education in PNG, the lack of basic services, such as good roads, good communication services and reliable supply of electricity, prevents widespread use of ICT. Recently deregulation of telecommunications has increased the number of telecommunication providers however ICT capacity is low, even by Pacific standards. Innovative applications of technologies (see the community radio project of Nauru) would seem to have much potential for PNG as a low cost innovative infrastructural approach as supported by COL. There is no doubt there is many opportunities for the further application of innovative technological solutions in the complex educational context of PNG.

In summary, PNG has many needs that could be addressed by the expansion of DE programs. Although no regulatory barriers are present to hinder

the expansion of DE, the country is challenged culturally, financially and infrastructurally to provide even the most basic access to education for its population. In addition the underdeveloped ICT infrastructure, a lack of incentives and understanding of the value of DE to the country by teachers employing traditional face to face teaching methods and programs that are not responsive to the labour market are some of the factors that combine to make the environment for the growth of DE difficult. However, it is difficult to contemplate any more suitable teaching mode for the complexity of the PNG educational context and therefore offers many opportunities and possibilities for the future.

SAMOA

The Independent State of Samoa (Malo Sa'oloto Tuto'atasi o Samoa, formally Western Samoa) is a small island nation situated on 9 volcanic islands in the central Pacific Ocean. The population of just under 200,000 people live primarily in rural communities with only one large town Apia as the Capital. Samoa has been independent (from New Zealand governorship) since 1962 and is a parliamentary democracy.

Samoa has had a very high rate of participation in education and adult literacy rate delivered primarily by non-government schools. The principal higher education provider in Samoa is the National University of Samoa (NUS), which is regulated by the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture under the terms of the National University of Samoa Act (2006). There are also two campuses of the University of the South Pacific in Samoa (which is a founding partner of that institution).

Another major tertiary organisation is the Oceania University of Medicine which provides a four-year MD degree for graduates, a four-year MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery)/MD degree for graduates and a 5 year MBBS degree for undergraduates. Graduates receive their post-graduate residency and internship at teaching hospitals in Australia, Samoa and the United States. The OUM is accredited by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities

The HE sector in Samoa is also subject to a strong national policy and regulatory framework including; The Education Ordinance (1959); the Compulsory Education Act (1992); The National University of Samoa Act (2006): and The Oceania University of Medicine (Samoa) Act (2002). Samoa has a strong and well developed regulatory framework predicated on the Samoa Qualifications Authority (SQA). The SQA accredits post secondary providers as a mechanism to ensure that the courses and programmes meet quality standards and adhere to the national qualification framework. A further quality framework is the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) for International Accreditation for the Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth, which was formally launched in April 2010. A major aim of the TQF is to discourage bogus providers trying to sell fake qualifications in the small states.

The integration of computer and communications technology into education is still in its initial stages and implemented through a variety of projects such as Schoolnet and the UNDP proposed funded e-bus. There are currently two broad initiatives in the area of ICT: the provision of ICT support and services and the provision of ICT training and education directed towards schools. The issue of online delivery is still relatively undeveloped and distance education is primarily delivered in a more traditional manner, with the USP providing distance and online options. The regulatory framework in Samoa is most appropriate for that mode. However, it is likely in the future that the interest in the online environment will increase rapidly and it is unclear as to whether Samoa is ready for that change.

SINGAPORE

The Republic of Singapore is a South-East Asian island state with a population of about five million and a very strong economy built primarily on its role as a world-leading trading and commerce hub. Singapore is a modern parliamentary democracy and is ranked 11th internationally in terms of GDP per capita.

There are four local universities operating in Singapore, the largest of which, the National University of Singapore, has over 30,000 students. In addition there are six overseas universities with some local involvement and many other institutions who operate in some form of partnership with overseas institutions. There are also five polytechnics.

Distance education in the form of 'virtual campuses' are offered by three of the four universities. These are to promote increased qualification and training for adults and specifically for professionals already in the workforce. Further, there are other specialist programs in operation such as PurpleTrain.com, Asia's first e-Learning provider and, with over 72,000 users, the largest e-Learning provider outside the United States.

For many years, Singapore has been predominantly a consumer of distance education programs offered by foreign universities. However, this situation is changing rapidly as a result of the wider adoption of e-learning technologies. Many of polytechnics in Singapore have adopted online technologies to deliver courses to part-time learners. There is also growing interest in the university sector from both foreign and Singaporean institutions in the use of media rich e-learning to support both blended and distance education.

There are currently more than 1,000 private education institutions in Singapore enrolling more than 100,000 students. Many of these institutions provide blended or distance learning courses. The five Singapore Polytechnics are at the forefront of the current trend towards e-learning. Each of these institutions has established an online blended learning environment to meet the needs of on-campus, part-time and continuing education students.

There are also a number of smaller private TVET providers active in Singapore that offer distance education programs to an international market. These providers aim to meet the demand from the rest of Asia for high-quality training. Typically, such institutions offer high school certificates (or equivalent) or diplomas in vocational subjects. Teaching is either by correspondence or online.

Many of the world's major universities are active in Singapore. Some have established a physical campus or have joint teaching programs in association with local universities and polytechnics. Some of these institutions allow students the choice of studying independently or attending local classroom-based instruction. There are also a number of overseas universities from countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom that have local students studying by distance mode.

The Higher Education Division (HED) of the Ministry of Education oversees the provision of public university and technical education in Singapore.

Public universities operate within the Quality Assurance Framework for Universities (QAFU). From 21 December 2009, external degree providers previously registered with the Ministry of Education (MOE) were required to register with the Council for Private Education (CPE). External degree providers must be registered under the Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF). The Enhanced Registration Framework requires adherence to rigorous standards in Registration, Corporate Governance, Quality of Provisions and Enhanced Information Transparency. Most importantly, registration is a continuous process. External degree providers receive registration for a specified period. Renewal of registration is dependent on the continued ability of the provider to meet the Framework standards.

The Government of Singapore is committed to the corporatisation of public universities. As part of this process, public universities have been granted greater autonomy from the Office of Higher Education. Under the new National Framework for Innovation and Enterprise (NFIE), universities are encouraged to seek outside sources of funding and to develop academic entrepreneurship. Enterprise Board will be set up at each university to drive this process. These Boards will to manage university-level Innovation Funds and allocate funding to entrepreneurship education, technology incubators, entrepreneurs-in-residence and other programs to promote commercialisation of university technologies. In addition, a Competitive Research Programme Funding Scheme has been established to encourage collaboration and partnerships between academia and industry.

The Government intends to establish Singapore as a key regional education hub. To this end, it has encouraged the growth of private higher education institutions and new public universities. The Government also intends to transform the role of the five existing Polytechnics. These institutions will be partnered with suitable overseas institutions and will begin to offer selective degree programs.

During recent years, Singapore has made the development of interactive digital media in education a priority goal. The Ministry of Education works with the National Institute of Education, local universities, polytechnics and private industry to develop the country's capabilities in this area. The Ministry's goal is to push the frontiers of research in use of interactive digital media for learning.

THAILAND

Thailand, located in central south-east Asia, is a populous country notable in not having been colonised by European nations at any stage in its history. Thailand is a constitutional monarchy with a King as head of state but its government has had a history of military coup d'états.

Thailand has a large University sector with over 160 universities, including 31 public universities. Access is through a standardized national university entrance examination administered by the Ministry of University Affairs.

The development of distance learning in Thailand dates back to the 1970s. The first university in Thailand to provide formal instruction by distance was Ramkamhaeng University (RU), founded in 1971. The Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University (STOU), established in 1978, was the first single-mode distance education institution. A number of Thai universities offer distance learning programs. The main providers in the area are the two open universities: Ramkhamhaeng University and the Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University. RU offers both on-campus and distance learning programs, while the STOU remains a single mode DE institution.

As the telecommunications infrastructure in Thailand develops, there is increasing interest in the use of e-learning. Although printed-based materials remain the primary medium of distance education delivery at the two open universities, a number of smaller institutions have begun to offer online courses. Only 4% of the Thai population have broadband access and only 10.2% of the population have dialup. Essentially online delivery is limited to the major urban centres.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) has overall responsibility for the regulation of Thai education. Institutions (both public and private) are required to submit annual quality assessment reports to their governing bodies and other stakeholders. Such reports are also made available to the general public. The Office of the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) is responsible for external quality assurance. All higher education institutions are required to submit to external assessment by ONESQA as part of a five-year cycle. ONESQA is a member of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN). Thailand is party to the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA). This agreement is expected to increase the activities of educational providers from Australia and New Zealand in Thailand by reducing institutional barriers.

THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) is a collection of atolls and islands in the Pacific region to the north of Nauru and Kiribati and just west of the International Date Line. They have a land surface area of approximately 180 square kilometres and over 11,000 square kilometres of lagoons. The Republic has a population of approximately 60,000.

In 1986, RMI entered into a Compact of Free Association with the United States to provide a wide range of services to the community. The education system of the RMI is based on a United States model and largely funded by the US

The College of the Marshall Islands (CMI) is the major post-secondary education provider in the country. The CMI is a US-accredited two-year community college offering a range of associate degree programs. In 2010, CMI enrolments were 1,178 students. Students at the CMI are able to enrol in associate degree programs in Liberal Arts, Business Administration, Nursing and Elementary Education.

The USP offers a range of courses at its small campus on Majuro. A wide range of certificate, diploma and bachelor level programs are offered by the USP through Distance and Flexible Learning.

Despite the range of courses on offer, USP enrolments in the RMI are relatively low. In 2008, enrolments totalled only 44 EFTS. Although most USP students in the RMI are currently from the main islands of Majuro and Ebeye, enrolments are increasing in the outer islands. The 2006 USPNet upgrade provided USP students at the Majuro Campus with improved access to audio and video-conferencing facilities. Students can now benefit from online learning materials on Moodle and a growing number of electronic resources hosted by the USP Library in Fiji.

The history of distance education in the RMI effectively began in 1990, when the nation joined the USP consortium. The USP remained the major distance education provider during the next two decades.

However, the USP is not the only distance education provider active in the Marshall Islands. As one of the US-aligned states in the Pacific, the RMI was also a participant in the PEACESAT program. PEACESAT is based in Hawai'i and offers satellite-based audio-visual conferencing to countries in the Pacific region. During the last two decades, the PEACESAT network has been used to deliver a range of training courses in the RMI.

The College of the Marshall Islands is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

The last known major reform in higher education in RMI occurred in the mid- 1990s. The College of the Marshall Islands initiated revision and strengthening of the core curriculum, expansion and refinement to the developmental English Programme, review and restructuring of teacher

education, development of a Marshallese Studies Program, establishment of a Student Services Support Program (SSSP) and strengthening of its physical and administrative infrastructures.

CMI intends to offer Baccalaureate degrees in Education and Nursing in the near future. The institution is also hopeful of expanding enrolments to 1,500 students.

Until very recently, Internet access in the RMI was expensive and unreliable. Bandwidth was a major problem. Even a major consumer of Internet services, such as the College of the Marshall Islands, had no more than a 64k link. This situation changed in 2010, when an underwater fibre-optic cable to Ebeye and Majuro began operation. This link provides both Ebeye and Majuro with reliable, high-speed access. As a result of this improved access, the College of the Marshall Islands intends to offer a range of distance education programs in the near future.

In 2009, the Republic of the Marshall Islands announced its intention to join the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Oceania initiative.

In recent years, the Hawai'i-based Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) has been a major provider of distance education programs to the Ministry of Education. PREL's office in the Ministry of Education was linked to the PREL head office in Hawai'i through PEACESAT.

The RMI is one of the US-aligned Pacific nations served by PEACESAT. The first PEACESAT earth-station in the Marshall Islands was established in 1997. Although the original reason for PEACESAT's presence in the Marshall Islands was emergency management, the network was soon used to deliver distance education. In addition to the earth station at the Emergency Management Centre, there is now an earth station at the CMI. Over the last decade, PEACESAT has delivered a wide range of programs to students, educators and administrators in the Marshall Islands. In particular, a consortium of PEACESAT users has made extensive use of PEACESAT's data and video-teleconferencing for clinical training in medicine and related fields. This consortium is currently the leading user of PEACESAT video-teleconferencing services for e-learning. The RMI Ministry of Education has also been a major user of PEACESAT. However, with the installation of the fibre-optic cable to Majuro and Ebeye in 2010, the future of PEACESAT in the RMI is unclear.

THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

The Solomon Islands is an independent commonwealth country situated approximately 2,000 kilometres north east of Australia. It is comprised of approximately 1,000 islands that have a total land surface area of approximately 29,000 square kilometres and are home to nearly 600,000 people. The Solomons have been independent since 1978 but have suffered from continuous political upheaval since then. This, often violent, disruption has disrupted many aspects of their economy, including education and communication, a situation further exacerbated by the 2007 Tsunami.

The education system is in a developing phase, but hampered by a lack of resources. The Solomons' government requires all foreign investment to be approved by the Government. This controls the entry of Tertiary education providers into the country. However, the deregulation of the telecommunications industry and the advent of further providers and ISP's will open the gate to distance education providers, and it is unclear whether the regulations are adequate to manage this likely change.

Regionally, the Solomon Islands are members of the USP consortium, The Pacific Education Development Framework and the Pacific Regional Initiative for the Delivery of Basic Education project. Both the USP and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) have campuses in the Capital Honiara along with the main vocational provider The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education (SICHE). The country's principle education regulations are enshrined in the Solomon Islands National Education Action Plan 2007–2009, The Education strategic Framework 2007–2015, the teacher education and development policy statement and Education for Living: draft policy on vocational education and training as well as the National Education Action Plan 2010–2012.

The quality assurance of tertiary education provision is less clear. The USP and the UPNG are accredited through organisations external to the Solomons. In addition, the Solomons have adopted the protocols related to the Transnational Qualifications Framework for Virtual University for the Small States of the Commonwealth.

Currently, the future of tertiary education in the Solomons is uncertain. The Government does not set requirements for awarding overseas scholarships based on national priorities; rather, it accepts what is on offer although the Ministry of Education and Human resources is currently reviewing this approach. Nonetheless, many young people prefer to seek higher education opportunities offshore.

The future provision of distance education appears to rest on the capability of the technology infrastructure and on the transition to a more orderly political and social environment. Currently, the communication infrastructure is not good, being expensive and with limited reach. However, recent deregulation, especially of the mobile phone market and internet providers may improve this and offer more opportunities.

TONGA

The Kingdom of Tonga is the last Monarchy in the Pacific and an archipelago of more than 170 islands on which live more than 120,000 people. Tonga has a vigorous pro-democracy movement, which has led to significant changes in the political structures in recent years. This will impact on the education system by raising both expectation and demand for higher education and improved access to gaining qualifications. However, currently there is a belief that the education standards in the kingdom are falling. This is aligned with issues of retention for both students and staff

in the education system. There is also criticism that the curriculum is too narrow. One of the main areas being impacted is that of the teacher training and the overall quality of that training. However, a positive factor is the improvement of the infrastructural standards, especially with respect to telecommunications.

The main tertiary education provider in Tonga is the USP, located at ' Atele, in the village of Ha'ateiho, just outside the Capital Nuku'alofa. There are also smaller USP centres located in the Vava'u and the Ha'apai island groups. There is also a small local Royal University.

The increasing democratisation of Tonga is leading to a stronger focus on a more rigorous quality dimension to both the TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and in HE (Higher Education). Already, the quality factors underpinning HE are linked to AUQA (Australian Universities Quality Agency—now TEQSA) and the New Zealand Academic Audit Unit (NZAAU). Because of the predominance of Church-based Education Providers, there are also strong quality links to other offshore institutions and systems through relationships between the private/church providers in Tonga and the host organisations/churches/institutions in their home countries. However, Tonga has established its own quality agency which is addressing the issues and concerns over standards. The country has also established a Qualifications Framework and Accreditation Agency to overcome the issue of bogus credentials for sale. Tonga is also a member of the VUSSC (Virtual University of the Small States of the Commonwealth), which is adding to the capability of educational provision in the Kingdom.

Government agencies, such as Ministry of Education, Woman's Affairs and Culture (MEWAC) and the Ministry of Training, Employment and Youth Affairs (MOTEY), are responsible for regulating both the vocational and training sector and teacher training.

Many students leave Tonga to further HE and TVET overseas. However, current practices and provision seem to be leading to improved standards, especially in the area of distance education provision in both the HE sector and also in TVET by providing accreditation and a Qualifications Framework. However, funding the local sites for HE provision will be an ongoing issue for a Tonga as will funding of the infrastructure. Nonetheless, there is a reasonable telecommunications infrastructure with a number of providers and competition leading to a lowering of costs. However, the current lack of a fibre cable to Tonga is significant and limits access to video conferencing.

TUVALU

Tuvalu is a small Pacific nation with a population of just over 10,000 people living on eight small islands. While independent, it is heavily supported by Australia and New Zealand and has little industry. Its education system is minimal at best and shows signs of decline in the quality at pre-tertiary levels.

The country is heavily dependent on voluntary provision of teachers for vocational education and the USP for higher education delivered at a distance. Provision of the Internet for education is primarily through the USP satellite system. Tuvalu is a participant in the Commonwealth of Learning's Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) project. VUSSC is actively engaged in the development of OER materials for use among member states.

Government policy and regulation is limited in scope, reflecting the small size and limited opportunities of Tuvalu. Quality assurance, regulation and change in higher education are very much driven by the wider initiatives of the USP, participation in international groups such as APQN and INQAAHE.

Further growth and change in the provision of distance education is very much in the hands of the external groups that in a *de facto* manner define adult education for Tuvalu. There is no evidence that the Government of Tuvalu is currently in any position to define processes or regulate development of distance education outside of the services defined and provided by those groups. Provision of telecommunication services (other than through the USP) is controlled through a monopoly provider, the Tuvalu Telecommunications Corporation, and this acts as a potentially significant barrier if separate delivery of distance education through telecommunications was envisioned.

VANUATU

Vanuatu comprises approximately 80 islands (65 are inhabited) with a total land surface area of over 12,000 square kilometres. The population of Vanuatu is close to 250,000 people. Vanuatu has experienced instability in its political processes since becoming a republic in 1980. Political issues, such as frequent votes of no-confidence in leaders, allegations of corruption and constantly changing governments, have been commonplace. The economy is fragile, relying upon agricultural and fisheries products for export revenue.

Public spending on education by the Vanuatu Government averaged 6.4% of GDP and 28.1% of total government outgoings in 2008. The highest expenditure on education is in the primary sector. Despite the overall percentage of expenditure on education being high in comparison to other more developed nations, the languages of English and French, a legacy of history, and Bislama complicate the education system and have created inefficiencies.

Influencing directions of higher education and distance education in Vanuatu is the USP, almost the only provider of university-level education in Vanuatu. USP has largely used English as the medium of instruction in Vanuatu. Recently the University is committed to the extension of its learning environment in Vanuatu to cater for Francophone students. This initiative is expected to widen access to university education for this segment of the Vanuatu community.

The Ministry of Vanuatu has identified distance education as a primary strategy for increasing access to formal and non-formal education and is developing specific policies for the space (http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/Institutes/pride/Subprojects/ODL_Policy_March_16_2006_draft.pdf). However, despite this official commitment to distance education in Vanuatu, there is a range of daunting obstacles. These include the lack of a Ministry-wide acceptance of distance learning as a legitimate mode of teaching, a scarcity of trained human resources, and the state of local telecommunications networks. The low level of computer ownership and Internet penetration in Vanuatu is a significant factor in this regard. A further problem for provision of distance education in Vanuatu is that it has become a host for non-accredited agencies forced to leave their home countries under regulatory pressure. These institutions purport offer to a range of distance education programs, from degree level to higher degree qualifications. Outside Vanuatu, these "universities" are widely regarded as bogus institutions offering fraudulent qualifications.

In summary, the barriers to distance education in Vanuatu include the access for its dual language population accessing education in their own language. The perceived lack acceptance of distance education as a legitimate mode of teaching is concerning, particularly given the challenges of a multi- island, multi-language, geographically spread republic. The lack of communications infrastructure presents further challenges for the development of a well-supported distance education mode of teaching. The most worrying issue may well be the lack of credibility of distance education as a teaching mode, perhaps substantially supported by the presence of non-accredited agencies. The impact of the reputational risk to legitimate distance education caused by such agencies could well hinder expansion and access to education for the population of Vanuatu.

VIETNAM

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam has a population of almost 90,000,000. In its first years as a unified country its economic model was a centralised planning model that significantly hindered economic development but in 1986 the government liberalised its approach and adopted an approach which while still socialist included some elements of a market economy and this has facilitated economic development.

There are 39 universities in the country including a number of private institutions and overseas universities. There are in addition some 24 institutions providing vocational education and training. Entry to higher education is very competitive. There has been a considerable increase

in participation rates in recent years—the total number of college and university students in 2009 was 1,720,000 which is 13 times the 1987 figure. However, the government is aware that participation rates in Vietnam are still far below those of other countries in the region. In 2009, there were 195 students for each 10,000 in population. The corresponding figures for Thailand were 374, Australia 504 and Korea 674.

The history of distance education in Vietnam dates back to the mid-1950s, when many colleges and universities established correspondence programs. From the 1965 onwards, Vietnam offered mass programmes of post-secondary education through correspondence courses.

In 1988, the Government established the first higher education institution specialising in distance learning, the Vietnam Institute of Open Learning (VNIOL). The foundation of the VNIOL was followed by the creation of Open Learning Institutes in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. These institutions achieved university status in 1993. Now known as the Hanoi Open University (HOU) and Ho Chi Minh City Open University (HCMCOU), the two Open Universities have played a central role in the expansion of post-secondary DE across Vietnam.

Both Open Universities play a significant role in the delivery of TVET, both through their own courses and through courses delivered in association with provincial training providers. Since the mid-1980s, the HOU, HCMCOU and other providers have made extensive use of radio and TV broadcasting in TVET course delivery. Regular TV and radio broadcasts feature teachers and industry experts presenting sessions on topics from the vocational training curriculum.

Vietnam has a number of universities with distance education programs. However, the major providers are the HOU and the HCMCOU.

The HOU has a full-time staff of 300 and 1,500 part-time lecturers and tutors. In 2009, HOU had about 65,000 students, 70% of whom studied by distance, while HCMOU had a total enrolment of about 65,000 students, 40,000 of whom studied by distance.

Both the HOU and HCMCOU use a number of technologies to deliver distance learning. Correspondence-based courses for self-directed learners are the primary distance education mode at the two institutions. In addition, printed materials are supplemented by materials on CD, DVD and CD-ROM. The two institutions have also launched pilot e-learning programs. HOU has selected the TOPICA platform, while HCMCOU is experimenting with the Mega e-meeting software.

The Ministry of Education and Training is the highest managing authority for the entire national education system. In 2004, MOET established the Department of Testing and Educational Quality Evaluation to support universities, colleges, established specialized units that are responsible for quality assurance in university and colleges. To date, more than 114 universities and colleges have conducted quality self-assessment, accounting for more than 70% of universities nationwide.

Overall responsibility for the accreditation within the Vietnamese education system rests with the National Accreditation Council, which was established in 2008. The NAC, which is part of MOET, administers the current accreditation regime in cooperation with the General Department for Educational Testing and Accreditation (GDETA). University accreditation is based largely on a system of self-assessment by institutes of higher learning. Institutes are required to self-assess themselves on the basis of the 2007 accreditation framework, which relies on 10 standards and 61 criteria. Many universities and colleges have institutional-level quality assurance centres and teams to carry out this process.

The future direction of tertiary education in Vietnam is clear in outline, although there many obstacles that need to be overcome if official goals are recognised. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) intends to significantly increase the university participation rate during the next few decades. This goal will be achieved through the expansion of the public university system and the creation of new private institutions. Some of these new private universities will be joint-ventures with overseas institutions, and others will be local campuses established by foreign universities. No special mention is made of DE in this context.

In a report published in 2009, "Report on the Development of Higher Education System", the MOET stated that the quality of higher education had not improved significantly in part because of the multiplicity of laws impacting on institutions and the poor "top-down" management of the system. A number of changes have been made or will be made including inter alia the granting of greater autonomy to institutions,

No special mention is made of distance education in the plans and aspiration of the Ministry although its intention that all universities and colleges should introduce credit based systems might provide students with greater opportunities by being able to transfer credits from distance education to face-to-face courses and vice versa. In addition, it should be noted that Vietnam has played an active role in the Open Education Resource Movement (OER) in recent years.

6 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The Asia–Pacific nations are culturally and linguistically diverse, with varied histories, economies, natural environments and educational traditions and policies. They are at differing stages of economic development. The Pacific region is a developing region, with only 1.5 million inhabitants, it spans 33 million km^2, 265 distinct languages and 60 cultures.The aid-dependent Pacific islands plus larger Papua New Guinea, one of the poorest under-developed nations in the whole region, stand in stark contrast to Australia and New Zealand, both English-speaking, developed nations with established higher education systems, above-OECD average participation rates and significant educational export markets (OECD, 2003; 2004) where open and distance learning is well-established and recognized at all levels of education. The Southeast Asian nations combine Indian, Chinese and sometimes Muslim influences with localised variations, as well as adopting some European/American features. Levels of economic development and educational provision are diverse amongst this group. Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines have high participation tertiary education systems relative to most Asia-Pacific nations. Indonesia and Vietnam, one of the region's poorer but emerging, growth economies, are significant importers of tertiary education Crossley, Bray & Packer, 2009).

Though the regulatory environment varies by nation (McBurnie and Ziguras, 2001), areas that are commonly regulated include granting of permission to operate, recognition of awards, independent or collaborative operation, admission criteria, courses offered, funding and student fees, student support and language instruction. Across the study area, there is a growing trend towards developing regulatory frameworks at regional and international levels in addition to frameworks at a national level. Regional or multi-state initiatives comply with broader policy agendas of economic development, plus local policies, and mainly concern quality control mechanisms. This indicates the importance of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance schemes as additional instruments for the integration and regulation of tertiary education sectors. Both qualifications frameworks and quality assurance schemes are connected to the mobility agendas of students and professionals.

Generally, Asia–Pacific governments regulate online distance learning less closely than other forms of education. Overall, there are less policy and regulatory impediments to e-learning than to any other form of cross-border education (Marginson 2004). The obstacles to online learning lie elsewhere.

The differences in regulatory approaches in the Asia–Pacific region seem to be based largely on cultural and economic issues, such as the level of development of a country's ICT infrastructure, the penetration rates of different forms of ICT, the emphasis people place on culturally unique content, willingness to invest per capita income and level of education. Intra-country digital divides are also rooted in socio-economic issues such as: differences between rural and urban areas, differences within urban areas and age groups, language barriers, caste differences, lack of access to electricity and lack of access to ICT infrastructure. Similar factors have been identified in earlier evaluative studies of online education in the Asia Pacific (Baggaley and Belawati, 2007; Farrell and Wachholz, 2003; Latchem et al. 2008; Martin and Bray 2009).

One country, Vietnam, is proving successful in the development of e-learning owing in part to its detailed ICT and DE policies (Doung et al. 2007). These include specific policies about DE and the ICT applications supporting it (e.g. use of Open Source software), and a high priority given to vocational training and the education of remote communities. In countries, like Indonesia (Universitas Terbuka), the focus of e-learning innovations is now on mobile technologies (Librero et al. 2007). Many of the problems currently jeopardizing DE initiatives in the region could be addressed by adjusting institutional funding and management practices to make them more specifically attuned to DE and ICT needs.

Major barrier in the region: ICT POLICY

- **Restrictive policies**
- **Affordability**
- **Accessibility**
- **Limited telecommunications and Internet service delivery**
- **Urban/rural inequities**
- **Literacy**
- **Capacity building.**

Not surprisingly, our research found a great deal of variation in the nature and extent of technology integration in the region. Examples of the most and least connected economies of the world can be found in our study area. While online education might appear to offer the greatest potential benefits to developing nations, the developing world often has poor telecommunications infrastructure, bandwidth, cable linkages and satellite receiver distribution, and insufficient public and private funds to invest in these technologies. At present, most Asia–Pacific nations still lack the communications capacity for broadly dispersed online distance higher education and only offer low intensity teaching and/or mono-cultural and mono-linguistic curricula, and the online degree is not viewed as fundamentally 'equivalent' to degrees from face-to-face education, nor as value for money relative to other forms of cross-border education (Eastmond, 1998; Hughes 2009). The Asia–Pacific nations exhibit a highly varied capacity to support networked educational technologies. The Pacific region has also been facing difficult times politically and economically. With recent political upheavals in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, French Polynesia and Fiji and these upheavals have affected the development of the

education and ICT sectors, in particular, amongst others. Because of these large differences, the more advanced economies of the region are aligned more closely with North America and Europe than with the Asia–Pacific region in terms of economic interests.

ICT policy variations and limitations

That ICT can play a substantial enabling role in improved delivery of education is well-accepted. The internet plays an important part in ICT-based distance education, and most applications are dependent on the net. Therefore, in addition to the policy focused on the telecommunications infrastructure supporting the internet, the policies and laws directly regulating the internet have an impact on the potential of ICT-based distance education.

Countries in our study area at differing stages in terms of having an ICT policy framework that goes beyond merely a "vision" level. Some countries have ICT as a priority and are committed to moving ahead with their development plans for this sector; for example, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Vanuatu, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia. Other countries acknowledge the importance of ICT for development, have plans to push forward with developments and are able to achieve some gains, but their governments are not providing the necessary recognition or funds. For example, Fiji, Tonga, Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa now have national ICT policies in place, but their implementation has been slow due to limited financial and skilled human resources to fulfil the aims and objectives of those policies. Indeed, the only country that has identified ICT as a priority and allocated substantial funds to the sector is Fiji. The Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Palau, French Polynesia and Tuvalu fall into this category. Yet others, such as Kiribati and Nauru, are yet to put ICT in any prominent position overall and lack leadership in and commitment to advancing ICT development.

Increasing ICT penetration rates and technology access, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, preoccupies policy-makers and regulators in developing countries. Whereas in developed countries, policy and regulation is more concerned with future-proofing (Samarajiva & Zainudeen 2008). Not surprisingly, the countries with the most mature policy development processes are those with more mature and robust economies, such as Australia and New Zealand. Not only do these countries have comprehensive policy frameworks, but also implementation strategies and mechanisms and measurement indicators. Moreover, they have committed resources to important aspects, such as infrastructure access and connectivity, training and learning software development.

The countries studied also differ in the processes used for policy development. For example, several of the Pacific island countries are participants in a regional ICT policy development initiative: the Pacific Islands Policy and Strategic Plan. Others are developing policy with

assistance from various agencies such as UNESCO. Although some countries have articulated policies for the use of ICT in education, they rely on donor-sponsored projects for implementation (e.g. Vietnam and many of the Pacific islands). There are also examples of networks dedicated to educational purposes emerging in the region. One such successful regional cooperation is the University of the South Pacific consortium's satellite-based communication network USPNet.

Many countries have restrictive ICT policies that do not necessarily facilitate broad access. For example, the region is replete with instances of telecommunications companies and regulators restricting public access to the frequencies used by WiFi equipment so that the providers can preserve their monopoly at the cost of hindering the growth of the information society (Anderson 2007, Forster 2007). While some countries, such as Fiji Islands, Tonga, Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa, now have national ICT policies in place, their implementation has been slow due to limited financial and skilled human resources to fulfil the aims and objectives of those policies. Regulatory and policy challenges can be very frustrating, especially in countries which have technologies in place but which lose opportunities because of exclusive licenses in telecommunications, data and voice transmission (Samarajiva & Zainudeen, 2008); Fiji being a prime example. In such contexts, there is limited freedom of access to low-cost bandwidth, quality multimedia and voice transmission, and providers cannot offer the best and most affordable service to users. The underdevelopment of infrastructure and the existence of telecommunications monopolies are maintaining high Internet access costs (Anderson 2007; Duffield, Hayes & Watson, 2008; Forster 2007). Deregulation of the market seems to be the key and, for example, in Tonga, mobile costs have remained relatively low as a result of having a deregulated communications market for some time now (Samarajiva & Zainudeen, 2008).

Besides the policy and regulatory complexities are the geographic and socio-economic factors that have to be taken into account, such as the size and terrain of a country; population densities of the settlements; the income level and its distribution among the population.

A large portion of the ICT divide across the region results from disparities in income. Although the prices of computers and other new technologies have fallen significantly in recent years, they remain beyond the affordable range of many people in our study area. Even where services exist, slow or congested bandwidth speeds and lack of access to computer services and repairs still provide barriers. Aside from the high costs of telecommunications in most of the region, there are large differentials in access rates between urban and rural and remote areas with access to the Internet principally located in towns and cities. Frequent electricity outages exacerbate these problems. Combined with the low levels of people's accessibility to computers, especially in rural areas, this situation with poor connectivity is a crucial barrier to the development of new media services and online distance education.

All of the countries have some presence online. However, the services are usually not "participatory". In most cases, Internet costs are high, especially in terms of local earnings, and "literacy" issues (conventional literacy, computer and Internet literacy and research literacy) are very problematic. Although today's ICT are superior in many ways to older technologies, they also have major limitations that alienate non-user groups, especially people who are illiterate or who do not have a working knowledge of a major European language—literacy problems are complicated by the predominance of English on websites and in other online resources.

The realities of limited telecommunications and Internet service delivery restrain expectations of major impact from new media, especially in Pacific nations, where there is little access to the Internet, and what there is tends to be slow and limited (Duffield, Hayes & Watson, 2008). More traditional forms of media, such as radio broadcasting, might prove more useful in the shorter term. For example, in many rural communities across the Asia Pacific, the radio remains for now and the foreseeable future the most reliable and accessible ICT for delivery (Anderson, 2007, pp.106–7). The customised approach may be to deploy digital technologies to enhance the effectiveness of radio rather than to replace it.

Given that the Pacific islands are small states, it is beyond the means of the national governments to provide the range and depth of training that will meet the needs of their national economies and at the same time provide opportunities for individuals to achieve their potential and personal ambitions in a field. None of the respondents indicated that there was any regional agreement that tried to rationalize education or training across the region. Good policy should facilitate and encourage regional cooperation, while maintaining national integrity.

We can only conclude that most Asia-Pacific nations and all large Asia-Pacific nations lack the communications capacity for broadly dispersed online distance higher education, at least at present and capacity building, both in infrastructure and people skills, is urgently needed.

Quality assurance frameworks

Online and distance learning should be presented as an integral part of national education and training and captured under the same financial and regulatory processes, rather than being treated as a separate, alternative option. Perhaps the greatest challenge for online and distance learning is maintaining high standards in a complex operating environment characterised by a diverse community of students and faculty, possibly spanning multiple time zones, cultures, nationalities and varying levels of technological capability and availability (Roffe, 2002). Nonetheless, although there are differences of nuance and emphasis, the quality assurance of online and distance education is not fundamentally different from the quality assurance of face-to-face education. Moreover, with an increasing number of programmes being designed for online delivery, whether on or off campus, or for study on a blended basis, the distinction

between 'traditional' or 'face-to-face' learning and online and distance education is blurring and would make the application of separate frameworks somewhat arbitrary in any given case. Separate quality frameworks are not the answer, rather a single but broader, more inclusive and encompassing framework is needed.

There are wide differences among the countries studied in their approaches to quality. In some countries, governments have taken steps to strengthen quality by introducing new reporting requirements or other mechanisms of management control. Some countries have developed accreditation systems, while others have established evaluation committees or centres that carry out cycles of external review. In many countries, independent bodies have been established, often a single national agency but sometimes, separate agencies are responsible for different types of institutions, regions, or purposes. The scope of responsibility given to quality assurance systems also has ranged widely. Such variations in approach reflect political and cultural preferences within each country, differences in governmental leadership and varying stages of development for the higher education sector.

Qualifications and credit frameworks need to be studied and compared in finer detail to really assess their impact on online learning or distance education and determine points of reference, convergence and common understanding. Therefore, quality assurance mechanisms provide a key regulatory tool in many of the countries studied and, as an important addendum to regulation frameworks, are considered in greater depth in the next section.

7 COMPARING AND CONTRASTING SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS IN STUDY REGION

INTRODUCTION

This section will focus on collating and discussing data including regulatory frameworks of the pilot countries pursued in this project as follows: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Pacific Islands Forum countries of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji (suspended from ASEAN on 2 May 2009), Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. The region chosen has provided for some interesting observations across large and small scale nations, which have differing operational contexts, advantages, challenges and constraints.

Rationale

The decision here to compare similarities and differences between contextual and regulatory frameworks data should be viewed in light of the extensive set of twenty-four country profiles available from http://icde.org/projects/regulatory_frameworks_for_distance_education/. Rich data has been assembled and contained here for viewing by a global audience. It has been impossible to verify beyond doubt these data. Where possible all observations are fully supported by data evidenced through websites and publications (as referenced) and as detailed within the methodology and should be read with some caution for generalisability. The project team hope that as the country profiles are reviewed that they will be up-dated by those best able to do so - by those affiliated with these nations. Given the pilot nature of this project we would recommend, funds permitting, a member-checking approach as adopted by Re.ViCa who organised " discussions with decision-makers, the planning and realisation of events at key conferences and the creation of opportunities for dialogues with international experts, respected and well-versed in the topic". (http://revica.europace.org/p12.html).

Relevance of the comparison to end-users

Many will find the comparison of data collected useful for a number of reasons. Not least that understanding country profiles and their respective regulatory environments can contribute to the improvement and enhancement of distance education across borders. As technology, connectivity and access to the internet improves across the globe, the opportunity for cross-border education increasingly has its focus on how technology can also mediate such experiences. While it was somewhat disappointing to locate very few regulations that relate specifically to

distance education, we were not wholly surprised. Many countries have overarching education policy that governs all forms of provision regardless of modality and, therefore, requires no special governance. Furthermore, many of the institutions were formed purely on the basis of their modality and, therefore, their governing policies were developed in light of that modality for that specific instance; for example, the Open University of Malaysia.

Overarching regulation or policy

Some legislation and policy regulating education (and therefore distance education) was identified for all countries.

Regulatory or policy influences

Out of the twenty-four countries, only four—the Commonwealth of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, New Zealand and Singapore—do not appear to align themselves with the Education for All (EFA) program (http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/) lead by UNESCO to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015, so as to contribute to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The eight international MDG's are agreed to be achieved by 2015 by 193 United Nations member states and more than 23 International organisations (http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/). Two offices are located in Bangkok and Suva to serve the Asia Pacific (http://www.undp.org/asia/). In our study, all but these four countries are working towards these goals and a variety of other programs, such as the United Nations Literacy Decade (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001840/184023e.pdf), UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education (http://www.unesco.org/delors/fourpil.htm) or the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) (http://www.desd.org/). It is perhaps not surprising that the Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and Singapore do not see these as in-country priorities given their developed status, but their governments are signatories to UNESCO and certainly contribute to the region's ongoing development in supporting these goals. Quality is discussed in the next section.

Regional regulatory or policy influences

The Pacific Board of Education Assessment (SPBEA) (http://www.spbea.org.fj/) has two main sponsors, Australia and New Zealand. The aim of SPBEA is to develop assessment procedures towards creating national or regional certificates. It has a membership of nine countries, all of which bar one, were part of this project: Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Australia and New Zealand.

The Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Republic of Kiribati, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga, Vanuatu, Republic of Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Niue and Republic of Vanuatu all fall under the University of the South Pacific strategic plan 2010-2102 which serves twelve member countries (http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/academic/pdo/Planning/USP_Strategic_Plan_2010_-_2012.pdf)

Additionally, these same twelve member countries align with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) (http://www.forumsec.org). At their latest meeting held in 2008 on Niue, leaders discussed a range of priorities, including education. The PIF is:

> an inter-governmental organization that aims to enhance cooperation between the independent countries of the Pacific Ocean. It was founded in 1971 as the *South Pacific Forum*. In 2000, the name was changed; *Pacific Islands Forum* is more inclusive of the Forum's Oceania-spanning membership of both north and south Pacific island countries and Australia. It is an official observer at the United Nation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_Islands_Forum).

According to the Secretariat the PIF is:

> Central to the Pacific Plan are a number of 'initiatives' that have been identified as a way to progress development across the region. While these initiatives overlap to varying degrees, they have been developed around four 'pillars.' Each pillar: economic growth; sustainable development; good governance; and security, represents in many respects the key areas (and challenges) that the Pacific as a region must work to address should it be able to raise living standards, increase access to opportunity and stimulate pro-poor growth for the peoples of the Pacific (http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/about-us/the-pacific-plan).

The Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) is also strong in the region, with fifteen countries included in our study being active participants, including Australia, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Australia is the key sponsor and is encouraging closer economic relations, enhanced regional trade, capacity building and economic integration (http://www.dfat.gov.au/fta/pacer/index.html).

In addition, the same nations are signatories to the 2001 Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) (http://www.forumsec.org.fj/resources/uploads/attachments/documents/PICTA.pdf).

The Republic of Vanuatu has a range of other regional agreements that include African, Carribean and Pacific Island States (ACP)-EU Partnership Agreement; Asian – Pacific Postal Union; Millennium Challenge Compact (with the United States); and is party to the following bilateral agreements: AusAID, the New Zealand Aid Programme, UNICEF and a number of European Union agencies.

Indonesia, Brunei, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Kingdom of Thailand, New Zealand and Australia are signatories to the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) (http://www.asean.fta.govt.nz).

The Republic of Kiribati, Samoa, Republic of Fiji Islands, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Independent State of Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Vanuatu are part of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) initiative called the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) (http://www.vussc.info/home). This unique collaboration across thirty countries has developed amongst other initiatives a Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF) that was launched in April 2010. As noted on the website:

> A 30-country international online course development initiative like the VUSSC poses challenges of qualifications frameworks and qualifications recognition. Courses developed under the aegis of the VUSSC are intended to be adapted and offered in many countries. But since the VUSSC is not an accrediting or awarding body, the institutions that offer the courses must accredit them locally (http://www.vussc.info/about-vussc/international-accreditation).

Another organisation, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, also provides technical and policy advice and assistance, training and research services to its Pacific Island members (http://www.spc.int). They are currently coordinating the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Oceania project for Islands of the Pacific (excluding Australia and New Zealand).

At the 2007 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Summit, the leaders of 21 nations noted "the potential utility of the One Laptop Per Child initiative and the need for education authorities … to assess the priority to be accorded to it in their countries as a tool for education and disseminating information to rural and remote communities…" In 2008, One Laptop Per Child Inc., and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) formed a partnership to introduce the OLPC concept in the region and conduct small pilots of the XO Laptop in schools in 5 PIF Countries: Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu. (* The pilots were made possible by (1) a donation of 5000 XO laptops by OLPC worth US$2 million and, (2) the assignment by OLPC and SPC of human resources worth US$500k.)

In 2009–10, 17 Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) nations will introduce the OLPC programme in their schools. Countries include the 5 original Pilot countries plus the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga and Tuvalu (http://wiki.laptop.org/go/OLPC_Oceania).

National regulatory or policy influences

Without exception, every country in this project has National Acts, Ordinances or Legislation relating to the governance of education. Distance education was found to be operating at all levels of education in the region: 50% of countries offer schooling by distance, 66% offer VET courses by distance, and only one country (Brunei) does not have distance education at a higher education level. In general, the project identified that all countries had a legislation and policy at a national level that impacted directly on a country's capability and capacity for distance

education. State/district level regulation could only be identified in the case of Micronesia, Vanuatu and Australia. Although most countries offer distance education in some form, especially at higher levels of education, and distance education has a long history in this region of the world, having operated in many countries since the 1970s, legislation specific to distance education was uncovered in only four countries: Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam and Vanuatu (http://www.usp.ac.fj/fileadmin/files/Institutes/pride/Subprojects/ODL_Policy_March_16_2006_draft.pdf).

Quality regulations

Establishing quality processes and standards for learning and teaching in online and distance education is a concern of many stakeholders. In some countries, it drives government policy and educational research and development in this area.

It appears that, in the twenty-four countries surveyed, twenty have processes for quality assurance and accreditation for distance education; although, it is unclear whether the use of new technologies has been addressed. For example, the Quality Assurance, Quality Enhancement special interest group (QAQE, 2010)observes that while technology-enhanced learning is increasingly embedded within standard practice in higher education, current approaches to quality assurance contribute to the neglect of the ways in which technology can enhance rather than simply augment teaching and learning and that these issues can be exacerbated in transnational and distance learning programmes.

A systemic approach to quality assurance and accreditation and formalised processes and delegated responsibilities could be identified in all countries except Kiribati, Nauru, Solomon Islands and Palau. It appears from our data that all bar six countries are members of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) or the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). APQN has a mission "To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them" (http://www.apqn.org). The APQN draws upon support from its membership options to serve fifty-three different nations in the ASEAN/ASIA Pacific region and works closely with the World Bank and UNESCO. Since 2008, APQN has participated in the Global Initiative on Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC). By way of contrast, INQAAHE is considered to be the global network of quality assurance agencies in higher education. Established in 1991, it now has more than 250 members (i.e. agencies that focus on quality) globally. INQAAHE collates, creates and distributes information to and for its members (http://www.inqaahe.org/index.php).

Of the six countries who are not members of the APQN, two (French Polynesia and New Caledonia) fall under the Education Code of the French Republic and are members of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The Federated States of Micronesia draw upon their historical past and responsibility of the United States

of America (USA) and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The ACCJC is one of seven regional accrediting commissions. The ACCJC is authorized to operate by the U.S. Department of Education through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (http://www.accjc.org/). Palau, Republic of Singapore (although the Council of Private Education has an intermediate membership with APQN) and the Solomons are also not members of INQAAHE.

Not surprisingly given their Muslim populations, two countries—the Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia—are members of Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (ADAAIW). Unusually, Samoa is a member of the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (http://www.paascu.org.ph/home2010), who are also members of the APQN and INQAAHE. The connection to this particular agency by Samoa needs clarification.

In this project, we expect that those countries involved would have similar concerns and expectations that their students, future employers and society at large would want to have confidence in the quality of their programs regardless of modality or the location of their students. Therefore, regulation and quality assurance is no doubt of interest and a concern. According to Guri-Rozenblit, (2009): "[t]he search for efficient and valuable quality control mechanisms will reign prominently on the future agendas of higher education institutions implementing the various capabilities of the digital technologies" (p.118). It is, however, unclear from data collected from many countries in this pilot how quality is defined, measured, acquitted or indeed attested.

The literature demonstrates that there are numerous ways in which to understand quality. Harvey & Green (1993) discuss excellence, consistency, fitness for purpose, value for money and transformation. Whereas, Jung (2008) noted excellence, conformance to standards, fitness for purpose, service and continuous improvement. In all, it remains that, as Prasad (2007) eloquently put it, "….quality is a concept; it is a philosophy; it is a journey; it is also what we practice. Quality for us is all of these" (p.vi). It is, however, Elhers (2009) who declares that quality needs to move away from ideas located around 'quality control and quality management' (p.69) and that '[t]he definition of educational quality cannot be normatively predefined and imposed but has to be developed in negotiation and through stakeholder participation" (p.70). He suggests that what is needed is an institutional culture of quality.

Chalmers and Johnson (in press) suggest that the key performance indicators in assessing quality in higher education typically apply to:

- Student outcomes
- Curriculum, courses and courseware
- Teaching and learning

- Student and staff support
- Assessment, evaluation and internal QA systems
- Management
- Staff
- Resourcing
- Returns on investment and benefits to the national economy and society.

It appears from our project that getting to the meaning or actions of quality is not straight forward. In many cases it has not been easy to uncover just how countries manage these issues even though it is stated that they obligations. In Australia it has become slightly more transparent although as has also been noted previously in this report distance education or its many other known names is not directly assessed but rather is left to the institution under new Federal Legislation and the newly created Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Accordingly:

TEQSA will be an independent body with powers to regulate university and non-university higher education providers, monitor quality and set standards. Its primary task will be to ensure that students receive a high quality education at any of our higher education providers. TEQSA will register providers, carry out evaluations of standards and performance, protect and assure the quality of international education and streamline current regulatory arrangements. It will join together the regulatory activity currently undertaken in the states and territories with the quality assurance activities currently undertaken by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Policy/teqsa/Pages/Overview.aspx).

So, in comparing and contrasting for similarities and differences, the project takes a similar view to Ehlers (2009): that developing a culture of quality is probably achieved "through communication and participation of individuals and groups in social interaction with the aim of building trust" (p.80). He also posits that "that viewing quality in the light of a cultural perspective means taking a holistic standpoint: quality culture combines cultural elements, structural dimensions and competencies into one holistic framework to inform the development of mutually agreed online standards" (p.80). Data collected in this project is not revealing across all countries when it comes to knowing how this process occurs.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE INVESTIGATION

The most surprising realisation to emerge during the project was that there is very little scholarly literature against which to benchmark distance education regulatory frameworks. Lengthy and detailed searches of academic and corporate literature revealed little other than agency reporting.

From our own investigation through the country and institutional case studies, a second significant realisation emerged. The data revealed that most institutions have limited public strategies or policy frameworks underpinning their distance education programs. Nevertheless, the case studies documented within the study reveal some well-executed implementations within organisations.

The investigation of the formal literature and desktop scan for this project revealed that there is a lack of reporting and rigorous documentation of the impact, even in a general sense, of regulatory frameworks on the provision of distance education. In the absence of better reporting, it remains unclear whether existing regulatory structures and legal frameworks are robust enough to deal with accelerating change in the education market, especially the diversification of education providers, the development of new ways of delivering education, the globalisation of education and the maintenance of standards.

Data from our twenty-four country surveys revealed that distance education operates with or without regulatory frameworks, which are not a sole factor inhibiting the operation or development of distance education. Individual institutions, as demonstrated within the in-depth case studies, have developed their own governance practices and procedures sufficiently for these purposes. However, it should be noted that cultural sensitivity can also inhibit a nation's willingness to be identified as otherwise in public forums.

Current regulatory frameworks and processes are not necessarily constraining development in distance education.

Variance in internet access and connectivity inhibits the use of technology for distance education. However, trends in mobile phone ownership and usage and perhaps other devices show promise in some countries, but have little impact in others.

Mobility and transportability of qualifications will increasingly be an issue.

The consortium were unable to assess whether the stability of legislation and policy (tendency for change), the effect of the accreditation and other regulatory requirements on distance education and the flexibility and transparency of the regulatory frameworks were likely to support good practice in education provision, decision-making and accountability.

Regulatory frameworks should be understood within their cultural context and do not on their own constrain or facilitate development in distance education.

The tendency for change within countries as political and socio economic imperatives alter affects whether the regulatory frameworks that currently exist are sustainable in all countries and will support good practices in education provision, decision-making and accountability. There is no doubt that International agencies (such as UNESCO or ICDE) and numerous quality assurance organisations and trade agreements across the region have an enormous role to play.

Ethically, this study can only report what was found and, unless the voice of the institutions is not captured respectfully, there appears to be little about the regulatory framework (or lack of it) that hinders distance education. Rather, it is other factors, such as the interpretation of law and regulations, resourcing, government mechanisms, level of wealth, ICT infrastructure and capability, capacity and skills that are likely to be the barrier to expansion of online and distance education.

Lessons learned

The biggest impediment to the project was that the purpose and audience of the project needed clarification in order to be able to constrain the scope of the pilot, which was too large and ill-defined.

Firstly, the legislative framework itself is complex, multi-level covering acts of parliamnet, policy, rules, governance and funding structures. The multiple levels of regulation and types of interacting regulation mean that a broad range of regulation had to be located and collated.

Secondly, a simple comparison of similarities and differences in regulatory frameworks would not answer questions about what and how regulation impacts on DE. Legislative impact is much more a question of interpretation, compliance and enforcement. There are two aspects to assessing legislative impact. One involves a legal/paralegal appraisal of the potential impacts of regulatory frameworks, based solely on the legislation and its interplay with other legislation at various levels. Assessment of actual impact is much trickier. The reasons for expansion or contraction of online and distance education are multi-factorial. To identify how legislation affords or restrains online and distance education would require isolating its contribution from that of other factors that could result in the same outcomes. Therefore, to understand any similarities or differences in regulatory frameworks or impact at other than a superficial

level, and certainly to accredit differences in impact to those similarities or differences in frameworks, which is much more difficult, requires understanding the context – international, regional, national, economic, historic, cultural and so on, as well as mechanisms for enforcement and the status of compliance. This meant a very broad range of information had to be collated.

Because of the scope of information to be collated and the difficulty in locating information, particularly for smaller countries, the number of countries included was too large to be comfortably achieved within the project's budget and timeframes.

Future pilots should be cognisant of extensive and intensive person hours for locating, verifying, analysing and editing information. For example, researching, building, editing, copyediting and uploading country profiles took 25 hours per profile. This task alone took 600 hours for 24 countries.

A further limitation that impacted on the timeline was receiving the country case studies on the due date. Future work should be cognisant that developing relationships and gaining commitment takes time.

Considerable time also needs to be spent ensuring cultural and political sensitivity is addressed and managed respectfully.

The project would have benefited from further stakeholder consultation within the countries studied. Language barriers and gaining commitment to completing the case studies required more time so as to establish deep and trusting relationships. Where possible, contact needs to be initiated with an 'in-country' resource person to add validity to the profile development process, and preferably one external to any of the institutions, who may be less impeded by 'correctness protocols'. While personal contacts proved useful, they were insufficient for successful approaches in all cases. Repeated attempts at contact were made with some institutions, but there was a lack of response or suspicion about use and representation of data. A champion for the project within the nominated institution was a definite advantage for achieving successful engagement with the project.

Resources and time permitting, our project team would have liked to have done a member-checking approach as adopted by Re.ViCa. This would enhance the reliability of data. Re.ViCa organised " discussions with decision-makers, the planning and realisation of events at key conferences and the creation of opportunities for dialogues with international experts, respected and well-versed in the topic". (http://revica.europace.org/p12.html).

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ICDE

- A tighter focus and better definition of some aspects of this study would clarify the terms of reference and greatly benefit any future continuation of the project. Suggested areas for review include:
  - ▷ Refinement and agreement of the definition and scope of online and distance education
  - ▷ The expected bounds of the regulatory frameworks to be considered need to be explicit, as a diverse regulatory environment impacts on the implementation and development of online and distance education
  - ▷ Explicit nomination of the stakeholders at whom the information is aimed
  - ▷ Clarification of the purpose of and audience for the online resource and how data will be used by ICDE
  - ▷ Clear identification of boundaries of future data collection (relevancy to purpose)
  - ▷ Consideration of the para-legal/legal analysis skills necessary for comparison of regulations and assessment of their impact, especially given the complexities of interplay between the various legislative levels: local, state, national, regional and international.
- There is a considerable amount of data available from sources that could be aggregated through feeds into the online resource to be used for analysis. UNESCO, COL, Re.ViCa and the CIA, amongst others, provide detail that should not be replicated but rather aggregated in some format. For example, how will the ICDE online resource differentiate itself from existing data sets and representation? What does the online resource add to what exists?
- Anecdotal opinion about constraints could be verified through a deeper grounded approach to the methodology. For example, anecdotal evidence of constraints is unlikely to be validated through survey approaches, due to cultural sensitivity issues, and this needs to be taken into account. Some were willing to speak 'off the record'.
- Caution is necessary when drawing assumptions about barriers to ensure cultural sensitivities are being observed.
- Refinement of data collection instrument may be necessary. The team collated and refined existing instruments, then took advice. Feedback invariably advised expanding on certain topics. This extended the survey beyond what a few individuals found reasonable, although many others through it was a very interesting dataset. The response was largely determined by the accessibility of information in different institutions. Some compromise may be possible with a more directed project.

- We recommend asking institutional members of ICDE to contribute profiles and case studies, with appropriate recognition as a benefit of being a member. The invitation to participate being sent via the President of ICDE would add importance and veracity to the request and likely improve response rates. This community approach could reduce costs considerably and provide for a sustainable approach to extending the project. This could also enhance the ICDE membership engagement and involvement with ICDE.
- Ongoing support of the ICDE Secretariat for maintaining and monitoring the online resource requires some thought. The team originally suggested an open online approach (via a wiki) so that members could update their own profiles, thus reducing the intensive maintenance hours. We would recommend that this be considered.

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10 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Project team

Professor Belinda Tynan

Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Quality

University of Southern Queensland

(belinda.tynan@usq.edu.au)

[BA(Melb), GradDipEd(ACN), GradDip Curriculum(Melb), GradDip(Higher Education)(NSW), EdD(UWA), MEd (Online Learning) (USQ)]

Professor Belinda Tynan is Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning, Teaching and Quality at the University of Southern Queensland. Previously employed at the University of New England as Academic Director, Faculty of The Professions. She is an educator who has practiced as a teacher and academic across various education sectors in the fields of music, history and higher education. She has been researching for a number of years in the area of distance education and a variety of sub fields related to learning and teaching for new and rich media, mobile learning, virtual worlds, workload for elearning and learning design. With many refereed publications, invitations to speak, consultancies and a significant grant record. Belinda is passionate about the field. Frequently called upon to review for major journals in the field, funding bodies and thesis examination. She is also a current member of ASCILITE, ODLAA, HERDSA and ALT. Previously the treasurer of HERDSA and ODLAA and is on the organising committee of ODLAA's SUMMIT 2013. Belinda is currently co-supervisor of three postgraduate students within the School of Education at UNE.

Dr Rosalind James

Director of DEHub
University of New England

(rjames6@une.edu.au)

[BA, BA (Hons, 1st), PhD (UNE)]

Dr Rosalind James is currently Director of DEHub: Innovation in Distance Education (http:/dehub.edu.au), as well as being Director of a large collaborative project to develop **EduONE**, a community education portal

offering open educational resources for lifelong learning. Previously, she was a Research Fellow with DEHub and with Project 2012: Flexible and Online, a course co-ordinator and lecturer in foundational pathway course in UNE's Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) and an academic mentor for transitional students.

Like many in the distance education field, Rosalind comes from a strong background established in other disciplines. She has been an archaeological consultant and a lecturer in Archaeology and Environmental Science, and has worked in diverse companies and government departments around the world as a senior manager and technical ICT consultant in the commercial information and communications technology arena.

Her research and publications in the distance education field at present focus on implementation and integration of ICT in learning, in general ,and Web 2.0 and social networking technologies, in particular; but also covers business use of technology and its implications for graduate attributes, professional development for academics teaching by distance and issues in distance learning. Since 1992, she has secured nearly $17 million in funding in diverse fields.

Dr Stephen James Marshall

Senior Lecturer in Educational Technology, Teaching Development Centre
Victoria University of Wellington

[BSc, BSc (Hons, 1st), Grad Dip Sci, PhD (VUW)]

As well as responsibility for managing academic professional development in learning and teaching, Stephen is also responsible for managing the formal student feedback process at Victoria. Stephen is a member of the E-Learning Directors of the New Zealand Universities Group and an executive member of the Australasian Council on Open and Distance Education. He is an auditor for the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

Stephen researches in the areas of e-learning benchmarking, plagiarism and academic integrity, intellectual property and the development of policy and strategy to support and encourage the effective use of technology. His e-learning maturity model (eMM) work has been adopted internationally and is used to guide e-learning improvement initiatives in New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the USA.

Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby

President of ACODE

Director: Academic Development and eLearning (Massey University)

[DipEd, BSc, PGDipSci, MEd (Hons)]

Gordon Suddaby's long standing commitment to the enhancement of student learning and teaching performance through the development and delivery of high quality teaching and professional development is reflected in his work as the Director of the Centre for Academic Development and eLearning at Massey University (NZ); in his role as an Academic Auditor in both Australia and New Zealand; as a teacher of tertiary teachers in the delivery of a Postgraduate Certificate in Tertiary Teaching; in his leadership in research and project activity; and in his role on the national and international stage particularly as the President of the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and Elearning (ACODE) and he is currently in his second term as President of ACODE, (http://www.acode.edu.au), an organization which has 44 of the 47 Australasian Universities as members. ACODE is the peak Australasian body representing the domains of open, distance, and elearning and provides highly regarded leadership, advocacy, policy, and professional development for its member institutions. Over the last 5 years Gordon has led a number of major projects funded by New Zealand tertiary funding agencies. Most significantly and on behalf of Massey University, he led the consortium of three NZ Universities and three Polytechnics which won the contract to host the New Zealand National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence (Ako Aotearoa). This is a twenty million dollar, five year project. http://www.akoaotearoa.ac.nz. In addition, he has lead further projects totalling in excess of NZ$2,000,000.

Dr Len Webster

AUQA

Dr Leonard Webster is a former Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) Audit Director and is now a Director, Regulation and Standards in the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Dr Webster has experience in teaching and learning in higher education in areas of quality development, eLearning, distance education, educational development research, educational strategic policy and planning, qualitative research methods and academic staff development. Len has a long track record in research and development in distance education and eLearning. In 2005 Len gained an Australian Innovations Patent for an eLearning Personalised Learning Environment and in 2008 co-authored the Educational Technology Framework for Monash University. He has also played an active part in the learning design and development of the Future Research Leaders Program, an initiative of the Group of Eight universities and the Commonwealth Government. Len has developed and taught in both the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education and the Graduate Certificate

in Law Teaching at Monash University and supervised higher education quality research.

Over the last decade Dr Webster has been actively involved in quality development and improvement activities at both faculty and university level. Len was an Associate Professor in Monash University's Centre for Advancement of Learning and Teaching. Prior to that he was Director of the Educational Development and Flexible Learning Unit, Faculty of Law, and worked in the Centre for Higher Education Development, Monash University. Len recently (2010) co-edited a book on Leadership and Management of Quality Development in Higher Education. In 2007 he co-published a book on the application of narrative inquiry research methods for complex and human-centred activities.

Richard Lewis

INAAQHE

[BSc, MSc, DHL (Hons), FCA, FRSA]

Richard Lewis is a former Pro Vice Chancellor of the UK Open University. His previous posts include Head of Department of Accountancy and Taxation at what is now London Metropolitan University, Professor of Accountancy at the University of Aberystwyth; Assistant Director (Pro Vice Chancellor), Middlesex Polytechnic (now Middlesex University) and Deputy Chief Executive of the Council for National Academic Awards.

He was a visiting Professor at the University of Washington, Seattle and served as Interim and Associate Chancellor of the United States Open University.

He is a current board member and a past president of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and is Treasurer of UKCISA - The UK Council for International Education and a member of the Council of the British Accreditation Council.

In addition to his academic work in accountancy, which included the co-authorship of an advanced text book which remained a standard text for over 20 years, he has been involved, both as practitioner and consultant, in a wide range of higher education policy issues. His special interests are in the fields of quality assurance, cross-border higher education and institutional management.

While serving as Co-Director of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI) and after his retirement from the Open University he has undertaken a wide range of consultancy and related activities in over 30 countries. These activities have included the design and provision of workshops on a range of topics but particularly involving internal quality assurance, advising quality assurance and accreditation agencies on the formulation of regulations and the design of procedures

while he has undertaken institutional evaluations for, amongst others, the Australian Universities Quality Assurance Agency, the British Accreditation Council, the European Universities Association, the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, the University Council of Jamaica, the Accreditation Council of Trinidad and Tobago, the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (Bahrain) and the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (Saudi Arabia).

He has acted as a consultant for a large number of national and international agencies including the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank. He has recently been involved in consultancy projects in Barbados, Botswana, England, Egypt, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Wales.

APPENDIX B: COUNTRY PROFILE FOR COUNTRY NAME

Geography	
Area	
Capital	
Largest city	
Other large cities	
Climate	
Time Difference	GMT plus X hours

People	
Nationality	
Population	
Annual population growth rate	
Age Structure	
Urbanization	
Ethnic groups	
Languages	
Religion	
Life expectancy	
Infant mortality rate	

Government	
Government type	
Head of State	
Independence	
Constitution	
Legal system	
Suffrage	
Administrative divisions	

Education	
Literacy (age 15 and over can read & write)	
School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education)	
Years compulsory	
Primary to secondary transition rate	
Female Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) - Tertiary Education as a % for School year ending 20XX	
Male Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) - Tertiary Education as a % for School year ending 20XX	
Education expenditure	
Distribution(%) of public expenditure per level (2010)	
Researchers per 1,000,000 inhabitants (FTE)	
Expenditure on R&D as a % of GDP	
Percentage distribution of gross domestic expenditure on research and development by source	

ICT	
Telephones - main lines in use	
Telephones - mobile cellular	
Mobile cellular subscriptions per 100 inhabitants	
Broadband Internet subscribers per 100 inhabitants	
Telephone system	
International dialling code	
Internet domain	
Internet hosts	
Internet users	
Internet users per 100 inhabitants	
Computers per 100 inhabitants	
TV sets per 100 people	

appendix B

Overview

Brief History

Governance

Education System

1. School education (Pre-Primary Level, Primary Level, Secondary Level, Non-Government Schools)
2. Vocational education and training (VET)
3. Higher Education (HE)

Pre-Tertiary and Tertiary Education

Overview of Distance Education

Administration and finance

Quality Assurance

Regulatory and PolicyFramework

1. International Regulatory and Policy Frameworks
2. Regional Agreements
3. National Regulations and Policy
4. State/District Regulations and Policy
5. University Policies

Higher Education Reforms

Future Direction of Tertiary Education

Information and Communications Technology Initiatives

1. Information society strategy
2. Major e-learning initiatives
3. Benchmarking e-learning
4. Support for OER
5. Government entities
6. Associations and networks
7. Distance Education journals

Interesting Distance Education Initiatives

appendix B

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Compiled from information available from the following sources:

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APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

Welcome to the

ICDE Regulatory Frameworks for Distance Education in the ASEAN/South Pacific Region

Institutional Case Study questionnaire

Instructions

1. Please take a moment to read these instructions before completing your casestudy.
2. Please return the completed questionnaire before [xxxx] **2011.**
3. We strongly encourage completion of the questionnaire electronically, but provision has been made for printed forms to be posted back.

   ❖ Electronic return — rjames6@une.edu.au

   ❖ Fax return —  +61 2 6773 3284

   ❖ Post to — 

   Dr Rosalind James
   DEHub: Innovation in Distance Education
   University of New England, NSW 2351, Australia
4. For any queries concerning the questionnaire, please contact the Project Leader:

   Dr Rosalind James

   ☎ +61 2 6773 2944

   rjames6@une.edu.au |

5. Please try to answer all questions. Use the following symbols if you do not have the data requested or do not wish to answer any question. The small reminder of these codes (at right) is placed throughout the questionnaire.

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Data missing or not available/collected at your institution*

T = *Data not available from your institution within survey timeframes*

D = *Institution declines to answer*

U = *Unknown for other reasons*

***** = *estimated figure*

Don't forget

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Missing*

T = *Not in timeframe*

D = *Declines to answer*

U = *Unknown*

***** = *estimated figure*

6. Please indicate any provisional or estimated figures with an asterisk (*).
7. Some questions require ONE answer; others allow MORE THAN ONE response and you can type an X in as many boxes as apply to you. If you change your mind about an answer, you will need to cut & paste the X to the correct answer box. Some questions ask you to type in your answer in your own words into the box provided. Please follow the instructions given on each individual question.

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8. Comment boxes should expand automatically to accommodate the length of text you wish to type and are not necessarily an indication of the length of answer expected.
9. No raw financial or other confidential information will be published on the web without permission. Most raw data will be aggregated in to broad categories (e.g. large, medium, small etc) before publication. Your institution will be asked to review and approve the final copy of your case study before it is published on the web.
10. This questionnaire seeks data for the academic year ending in 2010. For countries with an academic year spanning two calendar years, the academic year 2009/2010 should be used.
11. If data are not available for the requested year, please report the most recent year available and indicate which year that is.
12. Please indicate the reference period for data on enrolment, teachers and institutions provided in the relevant tables in this case study questionnaire. (Please exclude holidays preceding the beginning of the academic year.)

	Month	Year
The academic year began in		20
and ended in		

13. Please indicate the reference period for data on graduates provided in the relevant tables in this case study questionnaire.

	Month	Year
The academic year beginning		20

14. Please provide any additional comments on the academic year and data collection, if needed:

How long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?	

(

This questionnaire was compiled based on the following large, validated surveys with questions selected and amended for their relevancy to distance education:

CHEPS (2008), *Mapping Diversity. Developing a European Classification of Higher Education Institutions*. University of Twente, Enschede: CHEPS. Available from http://www.utwente.nl/cheps/documenten/2008mappingdiversity.pdf

van Vught, F.A., Kaiser, F., File, J.M., Gaethgens, C., Peter, R. and D.F. Westerheijden, 2010. *UMap. The European Classification of Higher Education Institutions*. University of Twente, Enschede: CHEPS. Available from http://www.u-map.org/U-MAP_report.pdf

Sursock, A. & H. Smidt, 2010. *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education. Brussells*: EUA Publications. Available from http://www.eua.be/Publications.aspx

Questions in the technology section were based on research by R. James soon to be published.

appendix C

1. Institution

Institution Name	
Contact details	
City of institution	
Country of institution	
Website/URL	
Name of person completing case study	
Position	
Email	
Telephone	

1.1 The present

1.1.1 Give a general description of the institution, putting distance learning into its current context. *(1-2 paragraphs)*

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1.1.2 Please indicate the number of male and female students in each of the age ranges undertaking full-time or part-time study at the institution and total full-time equivalents.

	Full-time		Part-time		Fulltime Equivalent Number
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male & Female**
16-25					
26-30					
31-35					
>35					

Don't forget

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Missing*

T = *Not in timeframe*

D = *Declines to answer*

U = *Unknown*

***** = *estimated figure*

1.1.3 Please indicate the number and full-time equivalent number of male and female staff in each category in the institution.

	Full-time		Part-time/Casual		Fulltime Equivalent Number
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male & Female**
Academic					
Administrative					
Management					

1.1.4 Please indicate the number of male and female students in each of the age ranges undertaking full-time or part-time study by distance education at the institution and total full-time equivalents.

	Full-time		Part-time		Fulltime Equivalent Number
Age	**Male**	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	**Male & Female**
16-25					
26-30					
31-35					
>35					

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1.1.5 What is the institution's "business model"?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Public
- [ ] Private
- [ ] Government-dependent Private
- [ ] Consortium
- [ ] National Programme

If consortium or national programme, list other partners (or members) and briefly describe the role of each below.

1.1.6 What best describes the area in which your institution is located?

- [ ] Rural / Small town
- [ ] Regional centre
- [ ] Medium City
- [ ] Suburb of urban area
- [ ] Urban area

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1.1.7 Who owns the buildings in which your institution operates?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Owned by the institution
- [ ] Owned mainly by the institution, some by others
- [ ] Owned mainly by others
- [ ] Not applicable
- [ ] Institution declines to answer
- [ ] Unknown for other reasons

1.1.8 How would you describe the profile of your institution?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Primarily research-based
- [ ] Primarily teaching-oriented
- [ ] Mix of research and teaching

1.1.9 Please summarize the mission statement of your institution (in no more than 250 words).

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1.1.9 Describe how the institution manages its "brand" (a) in general and (b) in respect of any distance learning aspects.

1.1.10 What percentage of the institution's students are based outside the home country? %

1.1.11 What modes of delivery are available to students at your institution?
(Several answers allowed. Please type an X in the applicable boxes.)

- campus-based/face-to-face
- web-based distance education
- audio-visual-based distance education
- paper-based distance education
- blended/hybrid learning (combining on-campus & distance learning elements in one

1.2 History of the Institute

1.2.1 What year was your institution founded?

1.2.2 What year did it begin distance education?

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1.2.4 Description of the institution's DE history, concentrating on key dates and any distance education or e-learning issues (2-3 paragraphs)

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2. External environment

2.1 Regulatory Frameworks

2.1.1 What is the institution's institutional and professional accreditation and legal status?

2.2 Funding

2.2.1 What is your institution's total income?

2.2.2 What are the sources of the institution's funding?

Don't forget

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Missing*

T = *Not in timeframe*

D = *Declines to answer*

U = *Unknown*

***** = *estimated figure*

% Income that is	% Domestic	% International
Public		
Direct government funding (non-competitive)		
Competitive government grant funding		
Other grant funding		
Private		
Income from student fees		
Income from donations		
Privately funded grants		
Self-generated (income from consultancy etc)		

2.2.3 Describe the way that funding is provided for this institution. Is it the same as for other institutions in the country?

2.2.4 If all students have to pay tuition fees, is it the same fee for domestic and international students? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Not applicable
- [ ] Data missing or not available/collected at
- [ ] Data not available from your institution
- [ ] Institution declines to answer
- [ ] Unknown for other reasons

2.2.5 Does the institution use full cost accounting in its external contracts?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, but we intend to in the future
- [ ] No, we have no intention of using full cost accounting
- [ ] Institution declines to answer
- [ ] Unknown for other reasons

2.3 National Policies

2.3.1 Is there a national policy in place for institutions to widen student participation?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

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If yes, please briefly explain the policy and incentives

2.3.2 Does your country have a national policy in place for life-long learning?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, but a life-long learning strategy is envisaged in the near future
- [ ] No, there are no plans for a strategy for life-long learning

If yes, please briefly explain the policy and incentives and indicate whether higher education institutions were consulted during development of the policy

2.4 External quality assurance processes

2.4.1 Do your external quality processes (Quality Assurance / Accreditation Agency) include an evaluation of the internal quality processes of your institution?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

2.4.2 Describe the external quality assurance and/or accreditation regime affecting the institution, particularly any features relevant to distance education. Are these processes the same as for other institutions in the country?

2.5 Higher Education Reforms

2.5.1 Please choose three reforms implemented in your country that have had the most direct impact on your institution's strategy in the past five years?
(*Please choose three items and, in the boxes, number them 1-3 in order of impact*.)

- ☐ Funding
- ☐ Autonomy
- ☐ Governance
- ☐ Internationalisation
- ☐ Quality requirements
- ☐ New career structures
- ☐ Entry requirements to different cycles
- ☐ Research policies
- ☐ Innovation policies
- ☐ Rankings/league tables
- ☐ Demographic changes
- ☐ Other (*Please provide details in box below)*

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2.3.8 Over the last ten years, how important have these developments been for your institution? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection on each line of table.)*

	Importance		
	Low	**Medium**	**High**
Funding reforms			
More autonomy			
Less autonomy			
Governance reforms			
Internationalisation			
Quality requirements			
More competition with other Higher Education Institutions			
New academic career structures			
Entry requirements to different cycles			
Research policies			
Innovation policies			
Rankings/league tables			
Demographic changes			
Other (*Please provide details in box below)*			

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Don't forget

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Missing*

T = *Not in timeframe*

D = *Declines to answer*

U = *Unknown*

***** = *estimated figure*

3. Internal environment

3.1 Budgetary strategies

3.1.1 What percentage of expenditure is dedicated to each of these activities?

	% Total revenue
Teaching	
Research	
Knowledge exchange	
Student support services	
Professional development for staff	
Other (please give details)	

3.2 Internal Policy and Process

3.2.1 Is life-long learning part of your institution's strategy?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ We are in the initial stages of implementing a strategy
- ☐ Not yet, but this is planned
- ☐ No, we do not see the need for this at our institution

Please briefly explain your strategy or planned strategy

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3.2.2 What is identified as part of the provision of life-long learning at your institution?
(Several answers allowed. Please type an X in the applicable boxes.)

- ☐ Continuing education for adults
- ☐ Professional development courses for those in employment
- ☐ Pre-bachelor preparatory courses
- ☐ Bridging courses to master's level
- ☐ Courses for senior citizens
- ☐ Distance learning courses
- ☐ Special support and counselling services for life-long learning students

---

3.2.3 Does your institution's strategy include recognition of prior learning such as formal and informal training, employment, work experience and life experience?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, but only as a component of a study programme
- ☐ Yes, as equivalent to a full degree
(e.g., a student could gain a Bachelor based on this & enter a Master programme)
- ☐ No, we don't do this

If yes, please briefly explain which types of prior learning are recognised and how

---

3.2.4 a) Does your institution issue any kind of Diploma Supplement to graduating students, outlining graduate attributes, employability skills or the like?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, to all graduating students
- ☐ Yes, to all graduating students who request it
- ☐ Not yet, but this is planned
- ☐ No, there are no plans to do this

b) If yes, is the Diploma Supplement provided free of charge?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Institution declines to answer
- ☐ Unknown for other reasons

3.2.5 Does your institution involve your students in the governance of your institution? (several answers allowed; please mark the selected choices in the second column)?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, formally, through participation in senate/council
- ☐ Yes, formally, at faculty/department level
- ☐ Yes, but only by providing information on the issues involved
- ☐ Yes, but only by supporting our students to attend national
- ☐ Yes, other (please specify):
- ☐ No

3.2.6 Do distance students have access to the same opportunities for involvement in governance of your institution? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.2.7 Are the programmes at your institution based on the academic year or are they based on units or modules? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

	academic year		**units or modules**
☐	Yes, in all study programmes	☐	Yes, in all study programmes
☐	Yes, in all some programmes	☐	Yes, in all some programmes
☐	No but intending to	☐	No but intending to
☐	No	☐	No

---

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3.2.8 Does your institution use a credit accumulation system for all Bachelor, Masters and doctoral programmes? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

	YES	NO
Bachelor		
Masters		
Doctoral		

3.2.9 Does your institution have a credit transfer system for all Bachelor, Masters and doctoral programmes? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

	YES	NO
Bachelor		
Masters		
Doctoral		

3.2.10 If your institution uses a credit accumulation system, how many credits are required to be awarded a Bachelor degree?
(*Please indicate minimum and maximum number of credit points or units*.)

MIN	MAX

3.2.11 If your institution uses a credit accumulation system, what is the expected semester load for students? (*Please indicate minimum and maximum number of credit points or units*.)

MIN	MAX

3.2.12 Do you have special policies in place to address the needs of the following groups?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection on each line of table.)

	Yes	No
Mature students (25+)		
Senior citizens (60+)		
Part-time students		
Socio-economically disadvantaged students		
Students without formal qualifications		
Ethnic minority groups		
Indigenous groups		
Immigrants		
Students with disabilities		
International students		

3.3 Internal quality assurance processes

3.3.1 Does your institution evaluate teaching through student feedback questionnaires?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes, regularly
- [ ] Yes, sometimes
- [ ] No

3.3.2 Does your institution have internal evaluation procedures for its study programmes as a whole? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- [ ] Yes, regularly
- [ ] Yes, sometimes
- [ ] No

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3.3.3 Does your institution have internal processes for evaluating individual teaching staff?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, they are obligatory
- ☐ Yes, they are voluntary (each teacher decides whether or not to participate)
- ☐ No

3.3.4 Does your institution use internal processes for evaluating student learning services (e.g. libraries; student orientation/advice services etc.)?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No

3.3.5 Does your institution apply internal processes for evaluating research teams?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No

3.3.6 Does your institution use data (performance indicators) to measure its research activities? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No

3.3.7 Does your institution use data (performance indicators) to measure its teaching performance? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Yes, regularly
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No

3.4 Graduate tracking

3.4.1 a) Does your institution systematically track the employment of graduates?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, we track the employment of all recent graduates
- ☐ Yes, we track some graduates
- ☐ No, there is no system

b) If yes, please indicate after which cycles you track the entry into the labour market? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ 1st cycle (Bachelor)
- ☐ 2nd cycle (Masters)
- ☐ 3rd cycle (Doctorate)

3.4.2 What do you expect your students to do after the first cycle (Bachelor) degree?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Most will enter the labour market, while a minority will continue to study at Master level
- ☐ Some will enter the labour market, and some will continue to study at Master level
- ☐ A minority will enter the labour market, but most will continue to study at Master level
- ☐ Difficult to say

3.5 Cultural context

3.5.1 How many different cultures make up the study body? ☐

3.5.2 How many different cultures can be found amongst the academic staff? ☐

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3.5.3 List the language(s) that the institution uses for instruction with the percentage of students studying in each. (Bilingual study can also be included.)

3.5.4 Describe any specific cultural or social issues that affect the institution's students, particularly any features relevant to distance education. Are the issues the same as for other institutions in the country?

4. Engagement

4.1 General information

2.5.3 Which community do you see your institution primarily as serving?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Local
- [ ] Regional
- [ ] National
- [ ] Pacific
- [ ] Southeast Asia
- [ ] Worldwide

2.5.6 How many conferences, concerts and exhibitions has your institution organised over the last year? [ ]

2.5.6 How many online events has your institution organised over the last year? [ ]

4.2 Regional context

Roughly define the geographical boundaries of what you consider to be your institution's regional context	

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4.2.1 Please provide the following engagement statistics:

Percentage of new enrolments coming from the region	**%**
Percentage of new distance education enrolments coming from the region	**%**

4.2.3 What percentage of total graduates remain in the region to work?
(Please type %number OR X in box to indicate selection.)

% ☐ less than 1%
☐ between 1 and 5%
☐ between 5 and 10%
☐ more than 10%

4.2.4 What percentage of total graduates working in the region two years after graduation? *(Please type %number OR X in box to indicate selection.)*

% ☐ less than 1%
☐ between 1 and 5%
☐ between 5 and 10%
☐ more than 10%

4.2.5 How many extracurricular courses are offered for the regional labour market?
(Provide details.)

4.2.6 How important are local and regional income sources to your institution?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Crucial
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not important at all

(Provide details of income, sources and why it is or isn't important.)

4.2.7 Does your institution offer joint programmes with institutions in your country?
(*Several answers allowed. Please type an X in the applicable boxes.*)

- ☐ Yes, with institutions that are similar to ours (e.g. if you are a university, your joint programme is with other universities)
- ☐ Yes, with higher education institutions that are different from ours (e.g. if you are a university, your joint programme is with a polytechnic, further education college)
- ☐ No, we do not see the need for joint programmes

4.3 Corporate context

4.3.1 How many partnerships does your institution have with business and industry?
(Provide details.)

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4.3.2 Are professional associations and employers involved in designing and restructuring curricula with the relevant faculties and departments? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Yes, they are closely involved
- ☐ Yes, they are occasionally involved
- ☐ No, they are rarely if ever involved

4.3.3 List the main associations that your institution is a member of, with a note as to the relevance of each to distance education (if any).

4.4 International context

4.4.1 Do students returning to your institution from study abroad encounter problems with the recognition of their credits? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Many have problems
- ☐ Some have problems
- ☐ None have problems

4.4.2 Describe the approach to credit transfer with other similar institutions, within your own country and internationally.

4.4.3 Does your institution offer joint programmes with other institutions in a different country? (*Several answers allowed. Please type an X in the applicable boxes.*)

- ☐ Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in all cycles
- ☐ Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the first cycle
- ☐ Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the second cycle
- ☐ Yes, there are examples of joint programmes in the third cycle
- ☐ Not yet, but some departments are planning joint programmes
- ☐ No, we do not see the need for joint program

4.4.4 Please provide the following other international engagement statistics:

Number of degree seeking students with a foreign nationality	
Number of degree seeking students with a foreign qualifying diploma	
Number of incoming students in international exchange programmes	
Number of students sent out in international exchange programmes	
Number of doctoral students with foreign nationality	
Number of programmes offered abroad	
Number of international academic staff members	
Number of incoming students in regional exchange programmes	
Number of students sent out in regional exchange programmes	
Number of students in joint degree programmes	

4.4.5 List the main international partners of the institution, in the order of strategic importance, with priority given to collaborations involving distance education.

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4.4.6 What percentage of your institution's total financial income derives from international research programmes?

%

4.4.7 What are the three most important reasons for your institution's interest in internationalisation? *(Please choose three items and number 1-3 in the boxes.)*

- [ ] To enhance the reputation and visibility of our institution worldwide
- [ ] To earn additional funding (in particular from tuition fees)
- [ ] To develop our academic activities (e.g. research collaboration, teaching exchange/ collaboration, curricula development, etc.)
- [ ] To enhance and maintain an overall international outlook for the institution
- [ ] Solidarity/ Development support for institutions in emerging countries
- [ ] Other

Please provide details

5. Strategy

(Do not include or refer to annual plans except as necessary to provide budgetary information.)

5.1 Institutional strategies

5.1.1 Describe or provide a link to a document describing the current institutional strategy.

5.1.2 Describe or provide a link to a document describing the current learning and teaching strategy.

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5.2 Distance education strategies

5.2.1 Describe or provide a link to a document describing the current distance education strategy.

5.2.2 What percentage of distance education students are
(*In each case, comment on the answer.)*

(a) taking courses wholly or largely delivered by e-learning

(b) taking courses where the amount of institutionally supplied/guided e-learning is "significant" (i.e. has an impact on staff or students)

(c) taking courses where the where the amount of institutionally supplied/guided e-learning is insignificant?

5.3 Budgetary strategies

5.3.1 What percentage of expenditure is dedicated to each of these activities?

	% Total revenue
Teaching	
Research	
Knowledge exchange	
Student support services	
Professional development for staff	
Other (please give details)	

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5.3.2 Give the percentage of the institutional income that distance learning represents. Comment on how it is estimated, including assumptions made, whether it is appropriate and any trends.

5.3.3 Categorise the role (if any) of external funding in fostering the development of distance education. *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- ☐ Not relevant
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Essential.

Comment on your choice.

6. Structure

6.1 Institutional structure

6.1.1 Provide a diagram of the institutional structure and describe it.

6.2 Distance education structure

6.2.1 Classify the distance education support model.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ hub
- ☐ distributed
- ☐ hub and spokes
- ☐ complicated
- ☐ non-existent

Comment on your choice.

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6.2.3 Describe in more detail the structure for the distance learning operation and how it maps into the institutional structure.

6.2.4 Describe the committees that oversee distance learning (including the rank and role of the Chair in each relevant committee) and their relationship to the organisational structure.

7. Research

7.1 Research intensity

7.1.1 What is the total number of research staff (full-time equivalent) in each of the following disciplines?

	FTE per discipline
Education	
Engineering	
Humanities and Arts	
Social sciences, business and law	
Life sciences	
Physical sciences	
Mathematics and statistics	
Computing	
Architecture and building	
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	
Veterinary	
Health and welfare	
Personal services	
Environmental protection services	
Other (*please specify*)	

7.1.2 Number of peer-reviewed academic publications by staff at your institution last year

7.1.2 Number of peer-reviewed professional publications by staff at your institution last year

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7.1.2	Number of competitive grants won by staff at your institution over the past year	
7.1.3	Total research revenues received by your institution from competitive grants over the past year?	

7.2 Research in learning and teaching

7.1.2	Number of staff at your institution that undertake teaching and learning research last year	
7.1.2	Number of peer-reviewed academic publications on teaching and learning research by staff at your institution last year	
7.1.2	Number of peer-reviewed professional publications on teaching and learning research by staff at your institution last year	
7.1.2	Number of competitive grants for teaching and learning won by staff at your institution over the past year	
7.1.3	Total research revenues from competitive teaching and learning grants in the past year	

7.3 Research in distance education

7.1.2	Number of peer-reviewed academic publications on distance education research by staff at your institution last year	

7.1.2	Number of peer-reviewed professional publications on distance education research by staff at your institution last year	
7.1.2	Number of competitive grants for distance education research won by staff at your institution over the past year	
7.1.3	Total research revenues from competitive grants for distance education research in the past year	

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8. Distance Learning and Teaching processes

8.1 Degree structure and curricula

8.1.1 Does your institution have a degree structure based on either two or three main cycles (Bachelor, Masters, PhD) in most academic fields? Comment.

8.1.2 What is the total number of students and number of qualifications awarded for each degree level to which your institution trains students in 2010? (*Please give an approximate figure*)

Number of students awarded	Bachelor Degrees	Masters	PhD	Other PG awards
Education				
Engineering				
Humanities and Arts				
Social sciences, business and law				
Life sciences				
Physical sciences				
Mathematics and statistics				
Computing				
Architecture and building				
Agriculture, forestry and fishery				
Veterinary				
Health and welfare				
Personal services				
Environmental protection services				
Other (*please specify*)				

8.1.3 What percentage of distance education students are enrolled in each of the following:

	%
General formative programmes	
Programmes leading to licensed/regulated professions	
Other career-oriented programmes	

8.1.4 Which disciplines are taught by distance? *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

Education	
Engineering	
Humanities and Arts	
Social sciences, business and law	
Life sciences	
Physical sciences	
Mathematics and statistics	
Computing	
Architecture and building	
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	
Veterinary	
Health and welfare	
Personal services	
Environmental protection services	
Other (*please specify*)	

8.2 Learning and teaching profile

8.2.1 How many qualifications were awarded in programmes leading to certified/licensed/regulated professions last year?

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8.2.2 How many programmes were offered that answer to a particular demand from the labour market or professions? ☐

8.2.3 How many qualifications were awarded in other career-oriented programmes last year? ☐

8.2.4 How many qualifications were awarded in general formative programmes last year? ☐

8.2.5 Qualifications awarded ☐

8.2.6 Which category best corresponds to your institutional profile for orientation of degrees?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ academic orientation
- ☐ mixed orientation
- ☐ not relevant

8.2.7 Does your institution recognise prior learning (e.g., work experience)?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- ☐ Yes, but only as a component of a study programme
- ☐ Yes, as equivalent to a full degree (e.g., a student could gain a bachelor degree based on this and enter a masters programme)
- ☐ No, we don't do this

8.3 Expenditure on teaching

8.3.1 Are staff at your institution expected to update their learning and teaching skills regularly?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Yes, mandatory as part of every annual cycle
	Yes, every few years
	Yes, but only when new processes, policies or technology are put in place
	No, only when staff fell the need

8.3.1 Does your institution pay for professional development for your staff?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Yes, minimum level expended on each staff member in a year
	Yes, up to maximum allocation per staff member per year
	Yes, but on ad hoc basis as staff requests for training are approved
	No, we expect staff to pay for their own professional development

8.4 Learning and teaching design and delivery

8.4.1 Describe how choice of pedagogies and technologies is made for a typical programme that is envisaged to include significant e-learning.

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8.4.2 Please outline your Institution's distance education delivery model by indicating how many students study in each mode in each of the following:

	Totally online	Mostly online	Blended learning
number of distance learning programmes			
number of part-time programmes			
number of part-time students			
number of programmes offered domestically			
number of programmes offered abroad			

8.4.3 How many qualifications did your institution award in 2010 in each of the following?

	Number of Qualifications
Continuing Education for adults	
Professional development courses for those in employment	
Pre-Bachelor preparatory courses	
Bridging courses to Masters level	
Courses for senior citizens	
Distance learning courses	
Special support and counselling services for LLL students	

8.4.4 How is design and development of courses/resources undertaken at your institution? Who is responsible for these tasks? What workload allowances are made for them? Describe what scope staff have at delivery stage to refine or in some cases override design decisions made earlier.

8.5 Learning and teaching development

8.5.1 What proportion of distance education content is sourced from outside the institution? (an exact percentage is useful)
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] 0%
- [ ] 1-20%
- [ ] 21-40%
- [ ] 41-60%
- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 80-99%
- [ ] 100%

Comment:

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8.5.2 Of all distance education content sourced from outside the institution, what fraction is OER (*Open Educational Resources*)? (an exact percentage is useful)
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] 0%
- [ ] 1-20%
- [ ] 21-40%
- [ ] 41-60%
- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 80-99%
- [ ] 100%

Comment:

8.5.3 When staff in your institution develop content, is the content:
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] owned by them and licensed to the institution
- [ ] owned by the institution but with some licensing back to staff
- [ ] owned by the institution but with no licensing back to staff
- [ ] unclear or disputed IPR position

Whatever option is chosen, provide a narrative describing the situation in more detail.

Comment:

8.5.4 When content is sourced for a programme within the institution, how much is sourced from other departments within the institution? (an exact percentage is useful) *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- [ ] 0%
- [ ] 1-20%
- [ ] 21-40%
- [ ] 41-60%
- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 80-99%
- [ ] 100%

Comment:

8.5.5 What is the role of student-generated content in the institution's programmes? (an exact percentage is useful) *(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)*

- [ ] 0%
- [ ] 1-20%
- [ ] 21-40%
- [ ] 41-60%
- [ ] 61-80%
- [ ] 80-99%
- [ ] 100%

Comment:

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8.6 Learning and teaching evaluation and quality

8.6.1 Describe the quality procedures (a) in general terms and (b) with respect to distance education.

8.6.2 Describe the approach to evaluation of programmes (a) in general terms and (b) where such programmes have significant distance learning components.

9. Meta Learning and Teaching processes

9.1 Policy

9.1.1 Is there a specific policy for distance learning and teaching? If yes, how long has this policy been implemented? Briefly outline the policy. If not, why not and is there any intention to develop such a policy?

9.1.2 Does the policy, or lack of policy, it help or hinder the implementation of distance education in your institution? Why?

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9.2 Communications

9.2.1 Describe how the institution communicates good practice in distance education within itself, focussing on communications across internal boundaries.

9.2.2 Describe how the institution communicates its good practice in distance education to organisations outside.

9.2.3 Describe how the institution communicates good practice in distance education from outside organisations into its own organisation.

9.2.4 Describe recent occasions on which institutional leaders or managers have made presentations with significant reference to distance education.

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10. Value for money

10.1 Describe the annual planning procedure (a) in general and (b) how it handles distance learning aspects.

10.2 Describe the decision-making process for a typical academic programme, with particular reference to how distance learning aspects are handled.

10.3 Describe the decision-making process for a typical large IT project such as selection and installation of a new LMS.

10.4 Describe the approach to budget management with particular reference to the staff versus non-staff issues in budgeting for distance education.

10.5 Describe the procedures in the institution for assigning or negotiating teaching workload to/with staff, taking account of non-traditional styles of teaching as well as classroom teaching and taking specific account of allowances for distance education and online learning.

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11. Staff

11.1 Teachers, lecturers, trainers and equivalent support roles

11.1.1 Describe the approach to development of distance education technical and pedagogic skills among staff, taking account of the different needs of different categories of staff. Set this within the context of staff development generally.

11.1.2 Describe (a) the current level of staff competence in distance education and (b) the expected level of staff competence in five years time.

Now		5 years
%		%
	Highly competent	
	Very competent	
	Competent	
	Somewhat competent	
	Not competent at all	

Comment:

11.1.3 Describe the extent to which staff attitudes to distance education are favourable or not.

%	
	Highly favourable
	Very favourable
	Favourable
	Somewhat favourable
	Not favourable at all

Comment:

11.1.4 Describe the way that the institution rewards and recognises staff with competence in distance education, in (a) monetary and (b) non-monetary terms.

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11.1.5 What is the student to staff ratio?

	MIN	MAX	AVERAGE
Overall combined average			
Education			
Engineering			
Humanities and Arts			
Social sciences, business and law			
Life sciences			
Physical sciences			
Mathematics and statistics			
Computing			
Architecture and building			
Agriculture, forestry and fishery			
Veterinary			
Health and welfare			
Personal services			
Environmental protection services			
Other (*please specify*)			

Don't forget

N = *Not applicable*

M = *Missing*

T = *Not in timeframe*

D = *Declines to answer*

U = *Unknown*

***** = *estimated figure*

11.2 Management and leadership

11.2.1 Describe the approach to development of distance education-related skills among (a) managers and (b) leaders.

11.2.2 Describe the current level of (a) management and (b) leadership competence in distance education-related skills appropriate to their levels.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

Management

	Highly competent
	Very competent
	competent
	Somewhat competent
	Not competent at all

Leadership

	Highly competent
	Very f competent
	competent
	Somewhat competent
	Not competent at all

Comment:

11.2.3 Describe the extent to which (a) management and (b) leadership attitudes to distance education are favourable or not.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

Management

	Highly favourable
	Very favourable
	Favourable
	Somewhat favourable

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☐ Not favourable at all

Leadership

☐ Highly favourable
☐ Very favourable
☐ Favourable
☐ Somewhat favourable
☐ Not favourable at all

Comment:

11.2.4 Give details of the job description of the most senior manager/leader in the organisation who spends a significant portion of his/her time on distance education matters (e.g. the Director of Distance Education).

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12. Students

12.1 Describe the approach to development of e-learning skills among students, taking account of the different needs of different categories of students. Set this within the context of students' more general information literacy and communication skills.

12.2 Describe (a) the current level of student competence in e-learning on entry to the institution and (b) the expected level of student competence on graduation from the institution.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

Level of e-learning competence on entry

- [ ] Highly competent
- [ ] Very competent
- [ ] Competent
- [ ] Somewhat Competent
- [ ] Not competent

Level of e-learning competence on graduation

- [ ] Highly competent
- [ ] Very competent
- [ ] Competent
- [ ] Somewhat competent
- [ ] Not competent

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12.3 Describe the extent to which student attitudes to e-learning are favourable or not.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Highly favourable
	Very favourable
	Favourable
	Somewhat favourable
	Not favourable at all

Comment:

12.4 Describe the extent to which students understand the demands on them placed by e-learning systems (e.g. for assignment handling).

12.5 Describe the current approach to handling student plagiarism, both prevention strategies and detection strategies.

12.6 Describe the current (i.e. at last survey) level of student satisfaction with the e-learning aspects of their courses. In each case use a 1-5 scale with a comment.
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Highly satisfied
	Very satisfied
	Satisfied
	Somewhat satisfied
	Not satisfied at all

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13. Technology

13.1 Is there enterprise support for the use of technology?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	High level of support from most executive
	High level of support from some areas
	Moderate level of support
	Low level of support from many areas
	Little support at all

13.2 Do information systems track performance and institutional data for educational accountability and decision making in your institution?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Data are not widely available in digital format
	Data are sometimes available in digital format but are isolated within discrete applications
	Data are routinely available in digital format, and systems enable some data to move across applications
	All data are available in digital format and systems enable aggregation and analysis from multiple applications

13.3 Do educators at your institution have access to the level of technology resources, training and support common to other professionals?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	Technology is old, unsupported and/or not easily available
	Technology is available but with very limited training/support
	Technology is available with some training and support
	Technology is widely available with full training and support

13.4 What technologies are available to staff and students for e-learning at your institution? If any of those listed in the table below are not available, please indicate if your institution plans to make them available in the future or if they have been considered and the institution has decided against using them.

(Please type an X in the applicable columns of the table below. Please choose one answer in each category.)

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	For Students				For Staff				
	Yes	no	Plan to	Decided against	Yes	no	Plan to	Decided against	Names of Products Available
Blogs									
Shared Calendars / Meeting Scheduling (e.g. Doodle)									
Chatrooms									
Citations/References (e.g. Endnote, Zotero)									
Document Repositories / Management Systems									
Document Sharing (e.g. Google Docs, Google Apps)									
E-mail									
Grid/Cloud Computing									
Instant messaging (e.g. ICQ, MSN, Google Wave)									
Learning Management System (e.g. Moodle)									
Microblogging (e.g. Twitter)									
News Sharing (e.g. DIGG)									
Notification Services (e.g. Google Reader)									
Online databases or directories									
Online forums									
Online Forums / Threaded discussions									
Password Management (e.g. OpenID)									
Personal Portals (e.g. iGoogle)									
Podcasts									
RSS feeds									
Search Engines (e.g. Google)									

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	For Students				For Staff				
	Yes	no	Plan to	Decided against	Yes	no	Plan to	Decided against	Names of Products Available
Shared Whiteboards									
Sharing Geographic Content (e.g. GoogleMaps)									
Sharing Image Content (e.g. Flickr)									
Sharing Presentation Content (e.g. Slideshare)									
Sharing Textual Documents (e.g. GoogleDocs)									
SMS / MMS									
Social Bookmarking (e.g. del.icio.us)									
Social Networking Utilities (e.g. Facebook, MySpace)									
Teleconferencing									
Telephone									
Vidcasts									
Video Conferencing									
Video Sharing (e.g. YouTube, TeacherTube))									
Virtual workspaces									
Voicemail									
Voice-over IP (e.g. Skype)									
Web Annotations (e.g. Diigo)									
Webinars									
Website									
Wikis									

13.5 Is your institution moving towards Anytime/Anywhere access?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No, but we intend to in the future
- [ ] No, we have no intention of adopting this strategy

13.6 Does your institution have high-speed broadband access that enables instructional uses that include collaborative learning, video-based communication and other multimedia-rich interactions?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] Access is not available
- [ ] Access is available but not for instructional purposes
- [ ] Access is available and used sporadically for instructional purposes
- [ ] Access is used throughout the school/campus for instructional purposes

13.7 Does your institution have a website/portal that provides the education community with access to applications, resources and collaboration tools?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

- [ ] No education website/portal exists for the institution
- [ ] A limited education website/portal is available for accessing some administrative information
- [ ] A limited education website/portal is available for entering and accessing administrative and academic information
- [ ] An extensive education website/portal provides administrative, instructional and collaborative tools and resources

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13.8 At your institution, is ubiquitous, reliable access to resources and services available through a multitude of mobile devices and access points?
(Please type X in box to indicate selection.)

	No wireless access is provided by the institution
	Wireless access is available in some locations, supporting a few mobile devices
	Wireless access is widely available, with support for many mobile devices
	Ubiquitous and reliable access is available for most/all student, educator and administrator devices

13.9 Does your organisation have a social media policy?

	Yes
	We are in the process of developing a policy
	Not yet, but this is planned
	No, we do not see the need for this at our institution

13.10 Does your institution have a policy for social media use on mobile devices?

	Yes
	We are in the process of developing a policy
	Not yet, but this is planned
	No, we do not see the need for this at our institution

13.11 How frequently are the digital technologies available in your institution used by staff and for administrative tasks? How frequently are students exposed to these technologies at your institution: in most courses/programmes, many, few, only at the student's own initiative or not at all?
(Please type an X in the applicable columns of the table below. Please choose one answer in each category.)

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	By Students					By Staff				For administration			
	Most Courses	Some Courses	Few Courses	Own initiative	Not used	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Not used	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Not used
Blogs													
Shared Calendars / Meeting Scheduling (e.g. Doodle)													
Chatrooms													
Citations/References (e.g. Endnote, Zotero)													
Document Repositories / Management Systems													
Document Sharing (e.g. Google Docs, Google Apps)													
E-mail													
Grid/Cloud Computing													
Instant messaging (e.g. ICQ, MSN, Google Wave)													
Learning Management System (e.g. Moodle)													
Microblogging (e.g. Twitter)													
News Sharing (e.g. DIGG)													
Notification Services (e.g. Google Reader)													
Online databases or directories													
Online forums													
Online Forums / Threaded discussions													
Password Management (e.g. OpenID)													
Personal Portals (e.g. iGoogle)													
Podcasts													
RSS feeds													

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	By Students					By Staff				For administration			
	Most Courses	Some Courses	Few Courses	Own initiative	Not used	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Not used	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Not used
Search Engines (e.g. Google)													
Shared Whiteboards													
Sharing Geographic Content (e.g. GoogleMaps)													
Sharing Image Content (e.g. Flickr)													
Sharing Presentation Content (e.g. Slideshare)													
Sharing Textual Documents (e.g. GoogleDocs)													
SMS / MMS													
Social Bookmarking (e.g. del.icio.us)													
Social Networking Utilities (e.g. Facebook, MySpace)													
Teleconferencing													
Telephone													
Vidcasts													
Video Conferencing													
Video Sharing (e.g. YouTube, TeacherTube))													
Virtual workspaces													
Voicemail													
Voice-over IP (e.g. Skype)													
Web Annotations (e.g. Diigo)													
Webinars													
Website													
Wikis													

13.12 Has your institution implemented personal ePortfolios that travel with students to demonstrate a wide range of skills and knowledge?

- ☐ not implemented
- ☐ implemented occasionally for some courses
- ☐ implemented for many courses
- ☐ fully implemented throughout the education system

13.13 Are computer-based or online assessments used to inform instruction?

- ☐ No assessments are done using technology
- ☐ Some formative assessments are done using technology
- ☐ Most assessments are done using technology
- ☐ All assessments are done using technology

13.14 At your institution, are technology-based assessments used to measure a full range of 21st Century skills and knowledge?

- ☐ Not used as paper and pencil assessments are the norm
- ☐ Occasionally used to measure student achievement
- ☐ Often used to measure student achievement and 21st century skills
- ☐ Always used to measure student achievement and 21st century skills

13.15 There exists a wide range of technology-based tools that can be used for various tasks in higher education. We are interested in which of these you use and your opinion of their value. We are also interested in whether you think that over the next five years, these tools will be used more by your institution, about the same , less or not at all.

(Please type an X in the applicable columns of the table below. Please choose one answer in each category.)

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	Value			Frequency of use in 5 years			
	Used & valued	Used but limited value	Not used	More	Same	Less	Not at all
Blogs							
Shared Calendars / Meeting Scheduling (e.g. Doodle)							
Chatrooms							
Citations/References (e.g. Endnote, Zotero)							
Document Repositories / Management Systems							
Document Sharing (e.g. Google Docs, Google Apps)							
E-mail							
Grid/Cloud Computing							
Instant messaging (e.g. ICQ, MSN, Google Wave)							
Learning Management System (e.g. Moodle)							
Microblogging (e.g. Twitter)							
News Sharing (e.g. DIGG)							
Notification Services (e.g. Google Reader)							
Online databases or directories							
Online forums							
Online Forums / Threaded discussions							
Password Management (e.g. OpenID)							
Personal Portals (e.g. iGoogle)							
Podcasts							
RSS feeds							
Search Engines (e.g. Google)							

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	Value			Frequency of use in 5 years			
	Used & valued	Used but limited value	Not used	More	Same	Less	Not at all
Shared Whiteboards							
Sharing Geographic Content (e.g. GoogleMaps)							
Sharing Image Content (e.g. Flickr)							
Sharing Presentation Content (e.g. Slideshare)							
Sharing Textual Documents (e.g. GoogleDocs)							
SMS / MMS							
Social Bookmarking (e.g. del.icio.us)							
Social Networking Utilities (e.g. Facebook, MySpace)							
Teleconferencing							
Telephone							
Vidcasts							
Video Conferencing							
Video Sharing (e.g. YouTube, TeacherTube))							
Virtual workspaces							
Voicemail							
Voice-over IP (e.g. Skype)							
Web Annotations (e.g. Diigo)							
Webinars							
Website							
Wikis							

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13.16 How useful do you think each of the following emerging technologies or trends will be for higher education in the future?

1) Increasing demand for real-time information to be delivered to Internet-enabled mobile devices (e.g. i-Phones & i-Pods) via Twitter, FaceBook, FriendFeed, i-Tunes and the like.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

2) GoogleWave—a crossover between instant messaging, email and a wiki.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

3) Location-based services (e.g. a photo taken on a mobile phone is instantly overlaid with information retrieved from the Web about the subject of the photo).

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

4) Amateur content curation/indexing and recommendation services—the challenge will be enabling "crowd sourced" content to be aggregated with institutional content but distinguishable and filtered based on quality and trust

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

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5) Cloud computing—data and applications that reside in "the cloud".
Examples include:

- Office Web Apps—free online versions of Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote, released in tandem with Microsoft Office 2010
- Google's Chrome OS—a free, web-centric operating system

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

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6) Internet TV—the expected growth in the uptake of applications such as Hulu, Boxee, Apple TV and Netflix's Roku box.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

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7) e-Book readers (e.g. Kindle) onto which hundreds of books can be cheaply downloaded.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

8) Social gaming (e.g. Playfish, Zynga's FarmVille game on Facebook), particularly for collaborative learning applications.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

9) Data mining and web analytics software coupled with visual data analysis (e.g. WEKA, RapidMiner, Orange).

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

10) Gesture-based computing.

- ☐ Highly useful
- ☐ Very useful
- ☐ Useful
- ☐ Somewhat useful
- ☐ Not useful at all

And finally:

13.17 Provide a description of any other technologies with significant use in the institution and add any other comments you may want to make about the use of technology in your institution.

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14. Futures

14.1 Describe the expected changes as they relate to distance education within the institution's current strategic horizon (from the institution's strategy documents).

14.2 Describe any changes further downstream that the institution is now considering or concerned about.

14.3 Describe how the institution handles the foresight aspects of its operation with regard to e-learning.

14.4 Describe how the institution handles advanced development oriented to e-learning (e.g. by a "sandbox" lab, innovation centre, etc).

14.5 Describe how the institution analyses and takes into account present and future markets for its offerings.

14.6 Describe how the institution analyses and takes into account present and future competitor suppliers for its offerings.

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14.7 Describe how the institution analyses and takes into account the views of other stakeholders, including but not restricted to employers, local authorities and the social partners (unions).

15. References and reports

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORMS, PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND ETHICS APPROVAL

DE Hub
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Australia
Phone +61 2 6773 3196
Fax +61 2 6773 3284
Belinda.tynan@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE in the

ICDE Regulatory Frameworks for Distance Education in the Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region
Pilot Project.

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by a consortium of DEHub, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and ELearning (ACODE) who are undertaking research sponsored by ICDE.

I confirm that I have read and understand the attached Project Information Sheet for Participants and understand the general purposes, methods, the tasks that I may be required to perform, risks and possible outcomes of the study, including any likelihood and form of publication of results. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.

I understand that:

- I agree to complete a case study questionnaire.
- Upon return of a completed case study, I will receive a $500 book voucher for my time commitment to completing the case study.
- I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
- while the information gained in this study will be published as explained, although my institution will be identified, I will not personally be identified, and individual information will remain confidential unless express permission is given by me.
- excerpts from my responses and/or interview may be included in the report and/or publications to come from the research, with the understanding that quotations will be either anonymous or attributed to me only with my review and approval.
- whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any future interaction I or my institution may have with any of the consortium partners or ICDE.
- I may ask that the recording be stopped at any time, and I may withdraw at any time from any interview or the research without disadvantage.
- all information gathered in this research is confidential and will be kept securely and confidentially at the University of New England and ICDE.
- I can contact the Project Leader at any time with any queries.
- the ethical aspects of this research have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of New England (Approval No. HE11/064, Valid to 31/03/2012).
- I can contact the SCU Ethics Complaints Officer if I have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research.

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- I should retain a copy of the Project Information Sheet for Participants and this Consent Form for future reference.
- I can obtain a summary of the results of the study when it is completed.

☐ Yes	☐ No	I agree to the use of anonymised quotations in any report or publication that comes of this research.
☐ Yes	☐ No	I agree to the use of direct quotations attributed to me only with my review and approval.
☐ Yes	☐ No	I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after being anonymised) in a specialist data centre and used for future research.
☐ Yes	☐ No	I agree to make myself available for further interview if required.
☐ Yes	☐ No	I agree to audio recording of my follow-up interview.

Being over the age of 18 years, I hereby voluntarily consent and offer to take part in this study.

Participant Name: (Please print)

Participant Signature:

Witness Name: (Please print)

Witness Signature:

Date:

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

When completed, please return this form to the project leader:

Dr Rosalind James

☎ +61 2 6773 2944

by

- ❖ Scanning/adding an electronic signature & emailing to  rjames6@une.edu.au
- ❖ printing, signing & faxing to  +61 2 6773 3284
- ❖ printing, signing & posting to 

Dr Rosalind James
DEHub: Innovation in Distance Education
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11 March 2011

Project Information Sheet for Participants

Project Title: ICDE Investigation of Regulatory Frameworks for Distance Education in the ASEAN/South Pacific Region

Project Leader:
Dr Rosalind James
University of New England
Armidale, NSW, Australia
+61 02 6773 2944
rjames6@une.edu.au

Dear XXX,

In their continuing effort to improve distance education, the International Consortium of Distance Educators (ICDE) is engaged in an important research effort to better understand the role of regulatory frameworks in promoting effective distance education implementation and best practice distance teaching and learning. ICDE have sponsored a consortium comprising DEHub, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and ELearning (ACODE) to undertake a pilot investigation in the Southwest Pacific/South East Asia Region.

The researchers involved in this project include Professor Belinda Tynan and Dr Rosalind James (DEHub), Dr Len Webster (AUQA), Dr David Woodhouse (INQAAHE), Associate Professor Gordon Suddaby (ACODE) and Dr Stephen Marshall (Victoria University Wellington).

On behalf of ICDE and our consortium of researchers, I am writing as project leader to invite you to participate in this project by contributing a case study of your institution. Ultimately, among other things, ICDE are striving to build an online open source databank with profiles of all distance education institutions, selected case studies and links to regulatory frameworks. Our regional project will pilot a methodology for collating institutional information relevant to distance education. Your institution has been selected as a participant because you are a provider of distance education in our study area. Your name and contact details have been obtained from your institution's web site.

This Project Information Sheet provides details about the project's context, scope and broader objectives. Please read this information carefully to help you decide whether or not you will consent to participate in this project.

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PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The objectives of this pilot are to:

- identify the main regulatory frameworks that apply to distance and online education in one region of the world;
- collate the existing laws, policies, rules and regulations related to distance and online education in that region in a database;
- compare the frameworks of all countries within the region and identify similarities and differences; and
- provide case studies as examples of distance and online education practice under the regulations currently extant within the region.

We propose to explore the regulatory frameworks for distance higher education of some key members of the ASEAN and the Pacific Island Forum nations within the Asia/Pacific region in three phases. The first phase involves **review and synthesis of existing literature** and regulatory agency material for the following countries: ASEAN: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the Pacific Islands Forum countries of Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji (suspended on 2 May 2009), Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Based on this research, a profile of each country will be constructed, providing contextual information as well as a summary of the regulatory frameworks potentially impacting on distance education.

During the second phase, information will be sought directly from **distance education institutions** in those countries to build a **profile** of all such institutions in the study region. Data will be collected in a form with pre-set questions.

The third and final phase will collect eight **case studies**. These case studies will be reflective of countries where a significant distance education institution is located and will illustrate institutional approaches to meeting regulatory and quality assurance requirements for distance education within their country. The development of these monographs will also be guided by pre-set questions.

The case-study research has four major objectives:

- to analyze the principal forms and distinctive features of distance education in higher education in 8 institutions in relation to regulatory and quality assurance policies;
- to identify current approaches and good practices in regulation and quality assurance of distance education provision;
- to identify the impact of regulatory framework on the distance education system in terms of quality, access, equity and funding; and
- to identify common effective regulatory provisions that apply across institutions and countries.

A **questionnaire** to audit institutional characteristics and overall policy and quality arrangements in the distance education institutions will ensure that consistent basic data is collected in both the institutional

profiles and the case studies in order to facilitate comparisons between the institutions. The final report will present an analysis of the case studies to illustrate differences in policy and practice.

The outcomes of the project will be disseminated using an open source content management system published on the ICDE website and linked to the websites of the collaborative partners i.e. DEHub, AUQA, INQAAHE and ACODE to ensure convenient access for the various stakeholders with an interest in distance education institutions or regulatory frameworks for distance education. This will provide a portable, scalable resource.

The information you supply will also be used in our regional analysis. In our final report to ICDE, the profiles of countries, institutions and regulatory frameworks within the region will be compared for similarities and differences, in particular, highlighting those elements that hinder or promote development in distance education. The comparative analysis will be discussed in the context of other recent research into regulation of distance education, which is the main focus of the research. The report will also provide a contextual overview of distance education in the region, an outline of the project, research methods and analytical results and presentation and discussion of 8 case studies of distance education institutions in the region. Publications and conference presentations will be part of the dissemination of the project's findings.

PROCEDURES

You are being asked to participate in the third phase of this project, which consists of completing a case study of your institution that can be added to ICDE's open source content management system to be published on the web. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your institution, generally, and your distance education implementation, in particular. These questions are presented in the attached Case Study pro forma, which you would be required to complete and return. This form has been pre-filled with any publicly-accessible information, to reduce the time required for you to complete it. You will be asked for information that will characterise your institution, particularly in relation to your distance education efforts. Therefore, we are seeking details about the size of your institution in terms of students and faculty, your organisational and business structure, the range of course/programmes and modes of study available, distance education initiatives, external engagement and technology use, which will be extracted from your case study to build your Institutional Profile. You may need to consult other staff in your organization to obtain information to answer some factual questions; others ask for commentary or opinion. If you choose to supply this case study, you are also asked to review the accuracy of the pre-filled information and amend or correct, as necessary.

After you have completed and submitted the case study, there may be brief telephone/email follow-up to provide you with an opportunity to add additional comments and clarification, if necessary. These follow-up calls would commence about two weeks after submission of the profile and would be arranged at a time convenient to your schedule. To ensure the accuracy of your input, we would ask your permission to audio record any telephone follow-up.

Results will not include any information that may identify *individual* participants who complete the profile on behalf of their institution, unless specific consent for this has been obtained. After the data have been analyzed, you will receive a summary of the results. You will be given a link to where the full final report will be available as an electronic copy (e.g. PDF). All data collated and collected will be provided to ICDE at the end of the project and will thereafter be maintained by them.

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Once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, if you agree to participate in this project, the **first** step is to **sign the attached Consent to Participate in Research form** and **return** it to the project leader (as instructed on the form). **Then complete the attached Case Study pro forma** and **return** to the project leader **before [insert due date]**. The final case study copy will be provided to you for review and will only be published on the web when you have approved it.

TIME DURATION OF PARTICIPATION

It is anticipated that participation in the study will not exceed 21 hours. There are [X] weeks to return the Institutional Profile. It is estimated that it will take about 20 hours to complete and the follow-up will take no longer than one hour.

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

In this type of project, it is normal to give the names of the institutions who have contributed information and, of course, it is intended that factual information about institutions will be made available to the public online.

We intend to protect, to the fullest possible extent within the limits of the law, the anonymity and the confidentiality of the person completing the profile on behalf of the institution in relation to any opinion or commentary responses made by them. Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality of any identifying information that is obtained in connection with these type of responses. If the results of this study are published, the data will be presented in group form and individual participants will not be identified. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. All computer files will be password protected. ICDE will be supplied with copies of all data collected or collated during this project.

To further protect your confidentiality and anonymity, your name and contact details will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers, for example, in order to know where to send your profile or transcripts of comments for checking. Your name will not appear in any report or publication arising from this study unless you provide express consent to be identified and have reviewed the text and approved the use of the quote. If you do not wish to be named, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity; however, you should note that as only one person at each institution is being asked to participate, it is possible that someone may still be able to identify you. This data will be stored in this secure, de-identified manner by DEHub, and will likely be archived in its de-identified form in the UNE content management system amongst the project management files.

The researchers retain the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. While individual responses are confidential, aggregate data will be presented representing averages or generalizations about the responses as a whole. De-identified data may be made accessible to further approved research.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation is entirely voluntary. No explanation or justification is needed if you choose not to participate; although we would ask you to notify the project leader within 7 days by return email so that another institution in your country may be offered this opportunity to participate. There will be no penalty

for choosing not to participate. Contact details for your institution will still be added to the online resource. Whether your institution participates or not, or withdraws after participating, will have no effect on any future interaction you or your institution may have with any of the consortium partners or ICDE. You may decline to answer any questions without explanation and still remain in the study.

TERMINATION OF PARTICIPATION

Participants are also free to withdraw their consent to further involvement in the research project at any time without consequences of any kind; simply advise the project leader by email. You may also exercise the option of removing your unprocessed data from the study.

QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS REGARDING PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant or would like to consult with someone not connected with this project, your enquiries should be directed to:

Research Ethics Officer
Research Services

T.C Lamble Building
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351

02 6773 3449
+61 2 02 6773 3543
ethics@une.edu.au

This research has been reviewed and approved the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of New England.

RISKS

The risks in this study have been assessed as low or negligible (i.e. no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life).

BENEFITS

Each participant will be given a $1,000 book voucher from [supplier] in recognition of the time commitment required for this case study. We think your institution, as a distance education provider in the region, will find this study very informative and interesting. A wide range of stakeholders, encompassing higher education institutions, as well as students' associations, prospective students, employers and their organisations, academics, researchers, policy making bodies at national and international levels, ICT development companies and the general public should find these country and institutional profiles useful. Being part of this project will be good public exposure for your institution, contributing to the advancement of distance education in the region and promoting awareness of cross-cultural differences in educational environments. So, we hope you will join us.

If you would like to participate by completing an institutional profile, please first send a signed copy of the attached Consent to Participate in Research form to the project leader.

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QUESTIONS REGARDING THE RESEARCH

If you have any questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion, or require any further information about the research project, please contact the project leader:

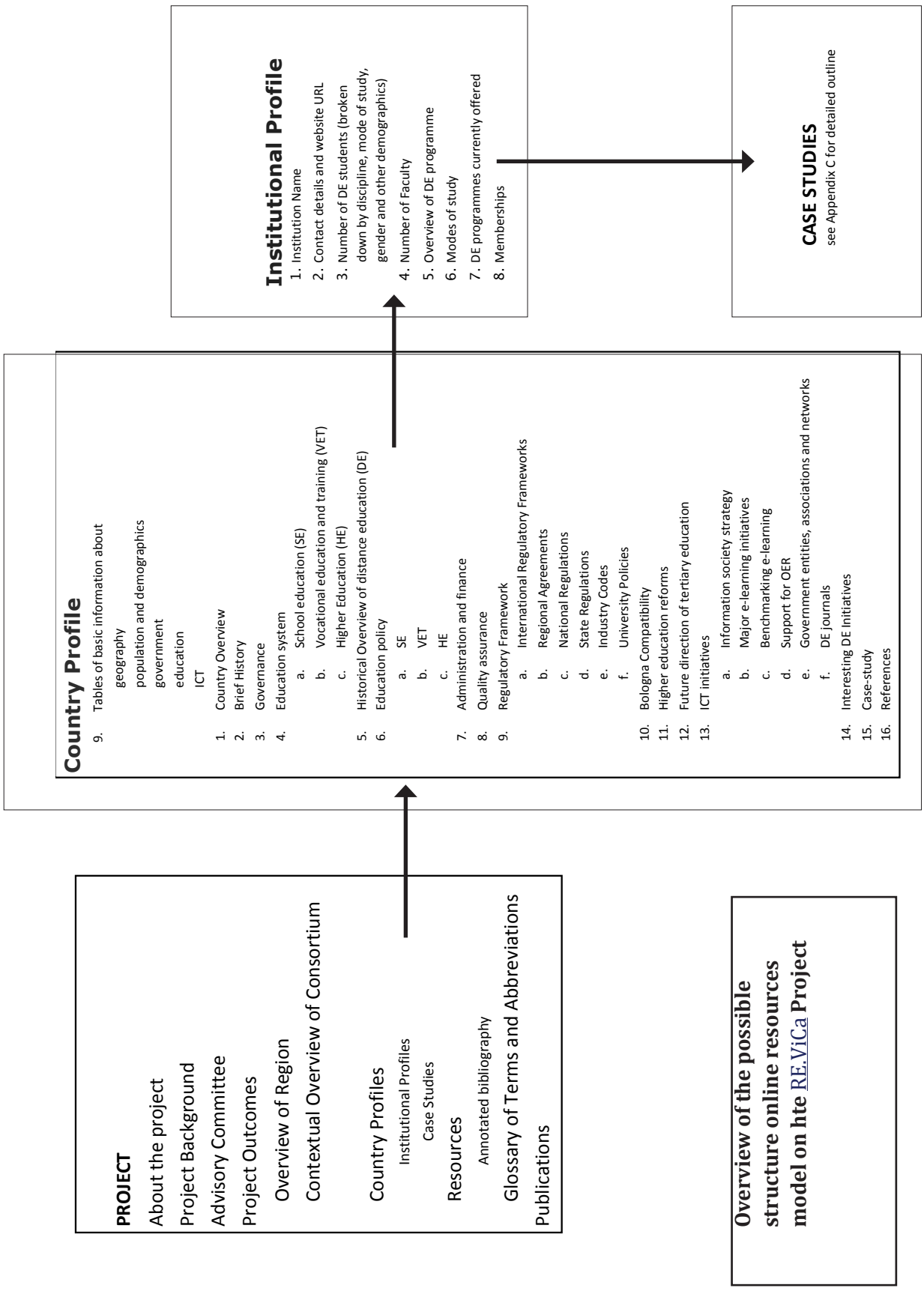
Dr Rosalind James
DEHub: Innovation in Distance Education
University of New England, NSW 2351, Australia
☎ +61 2 6773 2944
rjames6@une.edu.au |

We look forward to collaborating with you on this exciting project.

Sincerely,

Rosalind James

Appendix E: Conceptual Design of Online Resource



Appendix F: Summary of Regulatory Frameworks

Country	Regulations
Cook Islands	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** Education Act (1987) **State:** None
Republic of Kiribati	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) **National:** Education Ordinance (1977) **State:** None

Republic of the Marshall Islands	**International:** the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** RMI Constitution, Article II, Section 17 *Education Act 1991*, 14 MIRC 3 *Industries Development Act 1991*, 10 MIRC 3 *College of the Marshall Islands Act of 1992*, 14 MIRC 2 **State:** None

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Samoa	**International:** Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) **National:** *Education Ordinance (1959)* *Compulsory Education Act (1992)* *National University of Samoa Act (2006)* *Oceania University of Medicine (Samoa) Act (2002)* Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture: strategic policies and plan July 2006 - June 2015 (2006) National Curriculum Policy Framework 2006 Special needs education policy: a policy about the importance of special education within an inclusive educational approach for all (2006) **State:** None

Republic of Fiji Islands	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) **National:** Education Act [Cap 262] Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji Act [Cap 93] University of the South Pacific Act [Cap 266] Higher Education Promulgation (2008) Education sector strategic development plan 2009–2011 (2009) Policy in technical, vocational, enterprise education and training (tvet) (2007) Skills Training For Employment policy (STFE) (2006) **State:** None

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Federated States of Micronesia	**International:** Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** *College of Micronesia FSM Act of 1992* *National Literacy Act of 1991* Code of the Federated States of Micronesia. Title 40. Education FSM Strategic Plan for Improvement of Education FSM EDUCATION FOR ALL 2015 National Plan FSM National Youth Policy 2004-2010 FSM Content Standards The FSM Adult Education Program (FSM/AEP) **State:** Pohnpei StateDepartment of Education Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012 Chuuk State Strategic Plan for Education 2007-2012 Kosrae State Department of Education Strategic Plan 2008-2012 Education Strategic Plan 2007-2012 Yap State FSM Pohnpei Department of Education Curriculum Frameworks

Tonga	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) **National:** *Education Act (1974)* **State:** None
Tuvalu	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** *Foreign Direct Investment Act (1996)* *Tuvalu Maritime Training Institute Act (2000)* Tuvalu Department of Education Strategic Plan 2006 - 2010 Tuvalu education and training sector master plan (2004) **State:** None

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Republic of Nauru	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) The South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Oceania **National:** *Higher Education Act (1986)* Footpath II Education and training strategic plan 2008-2013 (2008) **State:** None

Solomon Islands	**International:** Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) **National:** *Education Act (1978)* *Foreign Investment Act (2005)* *Solomon Islands College of Higher Education Act (1984)* Solomon Islands National Education Action Plan 2007 - 2009 Solomon Islands Government Education Strategic Framework 2007 – 2015 Teacher education and development policy statement Education for living: draft policy on technical, vocational education and training (2004) Policy statement and guidelines for tertiary education in Solomon Islands (2009) National Education Action Plan 2010-2012 MEHRD, Policy statement and guidelines for the Tertiary Education in Solomon Islands, February 2010 **State:** None

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French Polynesia	**International:** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** Education Code of the French Republic **State:** None
New Caledonia	**International:** European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** Education Code of the French Republic **State:** None

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Niue	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Secretariat of the Pacific Board of Education Assessment (SPBEA) **National:** *Companies Act (2006)* *Education Act (1989)* Millennium Development Goals 2007 Report Niue Education Strategic Plan 2005-2010 Niue Education for All National Plan 2003-2010 **State:** None
Republic of Palau	**International:** US-based Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) **National:** *Foreign Investment Act (1990)* *Palau Higher Education Act (1993)* Education for All National Plan Republic of Palau 2002-2010 Education Master Plan 2006-2016 Millennium Development Goals Report 2008 **State:** None

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Independent State of Papua New Guinea	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) Secretariat of the Pacific Board of Education Assessment (SPBEA) **National:** *Divine Word University Act (1999)* *Higher Education Act (1983)* *University of Goroka Act (1997)* *University of Papua New Guinea Act (1983)* *University of Vudal Act (1997)* Guidelines for Institutional Accreditation 2002 Draft Higher Education Bill 2009 National Higher Education Plan II 2010 National Higher Education Plan III 2010 Development Strategic Plan (2010 - 2030) Medium Term Development Plan (2011 - 2015) Vision 2050 Gender Equity Strategic Plan 2009-2014 GENDER EQUITY IN EDUCATION POLICY Guidelines for Implementation TVET Policy MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS Progress Report for Papua New Guinea 2004 Achieving a better future A NATIONAL PLAN FOR EDUCATION 2005 - 2014 **State:** None

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Republic of Vanuatu	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Education for All (EFA) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) United Nations Literacy Decade UNESCO's Four Pillars of Education United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) **Regional:** USP Strategic Plan 2010-2012 Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education (PRIDE) Project Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2009-2015 The Pacific Plan (the Pacific Plan Task Force is managed by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General) Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) Secretariat of the Pacific Board of Education Assessment (SPBEA) Other regional agreements relevant to DE include: African, Carribean and Pacific Island States (ACP)-EU Partnership Agreement Asian – Pacific Postal Union Millennium Challenge Compact (with the United States) Pacific Agreement on Closer Trade Relations (PACER) Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) Party to the following bilateral agreements: AusAID, the New Zealand Aid Programme, UNICEF and a number of European Union agencies **National:** Business Licence Act (1998) Education Act (2001) Foreign Investment Promotion Act (1998) International Companies Act (1992) Vanuatu National Training Council Act (1999) Education master plan 2000-2010 (1999) Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy (VESS) 2007 – 2016 - Incorporating the Ministry of Education Corporate Plan and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework for 2007 - 2009 (2006 Working draft) Republic of Vanuatu TVET policy and strategy (2004) Policy for open and distance education learning, Vanuatu (2009) Vanuatu qualifications framework: draft November 2004 EFA national plan of action 2001-2015 Republic of Vanuatu (2004) **State:** Vanuatu National Training Council (VNTC)

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Commonwealth of Australia	**International:** Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) **Regional:** None **National:** *Australian National Training Authority Act (1992)* *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act (2000)* *Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRISCOS) Act (1999)* *Higher Education Support Act (2003)* *Skilling Australia's Workforce Act (2005)* *Skills Australia Act (2008)* Shaping Our Future: Australia's national strategy for vocational education and training 2004-2010 (2003) Transforming Australia's higher education system (2009) An education revolution for Australia's future (2009) Melbourne declaration on educational goals for young Australians (2008) MCEETYA Four Year Plan, 2009–2012: Companion document for the Melbourne Declaration (2009) Skills' Australia foundations for the future (2009) Digital Education Revolution Strategic Plan (2008) National Professional Standards for Teachers Draft 2010 **State:** Each State or Territory has its own Education Act (or equivalent) and extensive legislation relating to public and private TVET provision: As an idea NSW legislation follows: *Education Act (1990)* *Teaching Service Act (1980)* *Teaching Service Regulation (2007)* *Parents and Citizens Associations Incorporation Act (1976)* *Commission for Children and Young People Act (1998)* *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act (1998)* *Institute of Teachers Act (2004)* *Education (School Administrative and Support Staff) Act (1987)* *Education (School Administrative and Support Staff) Regulation (2008)* *TAFE Act (1990)* *Vocational Education and Training Act (2005)* *Australian Catholic University Act (1990)* *Charles Sturt University Act (1989)* *Macquarie University Act (1989)* *Southern Cross University Act (1993)* *University of New England Act (1993)* *University of New South Wales Act (1989)* *University of Newcastle Act (1989)* *University of Sydney Act (1989)* *University of Technology, Sydney, Act (1989)* *University of Western Sydney Act (1997)* *University of Wollongong Act (1989)*

Republic of Indonesia	**International:** Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (ADAAIW) ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) **Regional:** ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) (as soon as possible) UNPDP United Nations Partnership For Development Framework 2011-2015: Indonesia Let speak out for MDGs: achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Indonesia Indonesia: EFA Mid-Decade Assessment 2007 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Indonesia 2006-2010 Indonesia's Education for All: national plan of action 2003/2015 **National:** National Education Act (2003) Indonesia: national report. 48th session of the International Conference on Education, ICE: "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future", Geneva, 25-28 November 2008 **State:** None

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Malaysia	**International:** Association of Quality Assurance Agencies of the Islamic World (ADAAIW) ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) **Regional:** Malaysia Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment Report 2000-2007 Achieving The Millennium Development Goals 2005 **National:** *Education Act (1996)* *Malaysian Qualifications Act (2007)* *National Council on Higher Education Act (1996)* *National Higher Education Funding Act (1997)* *Private Higher Educational Institutions Act (1996)* *University and University Colleges Act (1971)* *Universiti Teknologi MARA Act (1976)* National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010 Education Development Plan For Malaysia 2001-2010 The Development of Education 2008 ICT in Malaysian Schools: Policy and Strategies (2002) Pelan Induk Pembangunan Pendidikan PIPP 2006-2010 **State:** None
New Zealand	**International:** None **Regional:** None **National:** *Education Act 1989* Tertiary Education Strategy 2010-2015 Statement of intent 2010-2015 **State:** None

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Brunei Darussalam	**International:** ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) **Regional:** ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) **National:** *Universiti Brunei Darussalam Act (1999)* *Education Order (2003)* [and many associated amendments) *Education (Brunei Board of Examinations) Act [1984 Ed.]* The Ministry of Education: strategic plan 2007-2011 Brunei Darussalam: national report. 48th session of the International Conference on Education, ICE: "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future", Geneva, 25-28 November 2008 **State:** None
Republic of Singapore	**International:** Foreign universities operating in Singapore are expected to adhere to the regulatory standards prevailing in their countries of origin. **Regional:** 2000 Banhkok Accord ASEAN University Network AUN-QA Network **National:** *Compulsory Education Act (2002)* *Education Act (1957)* *Education Service Incentive Payment Act (2001)* *Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Act (1968)* *Institute of Technical Education Act (1992)* *National Research Fund Act (2006)* *Nanyang Polytechnic Act (1992)* *Nanyang Technological University (Corporatisation) Act (2005)* *Private Education Act (2009)* *Temasek Polytechnic Act (1991)* **State:** None

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Socialist Republic of Vietnam	**International:** ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) **Regional:** ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) **National:** *Education Law (2005)* *Higher Education Law (2010)* Directive on renovating higher education management for the period of 2010 – 2012 14th Draft Strategy for Education Development Vietnam 2009 - 2020 [in Vietnamese] Report on the development of higher education system, the solutions to ensure quality assurance and improve of education quality Education Law (Law No 38/2005/QH11) National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Eleventh Legislature, Seventh Session (from 5th May to 14th June, 2005) National Education for All (EFA) Action Plan 2003-2015 Vietnamese education and training development strategy to the year 2010 for the cause of industrialization and modernization of Vietnam **State:** None
Kingdom of Thailand	**International:** ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) **Regional:** ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area Agreement (AANZFTA) **National:** National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999) Skill Development Promotion Act B.E. 2545 (2002) Second National Education Act B.E.2545 (2002) **State:** None